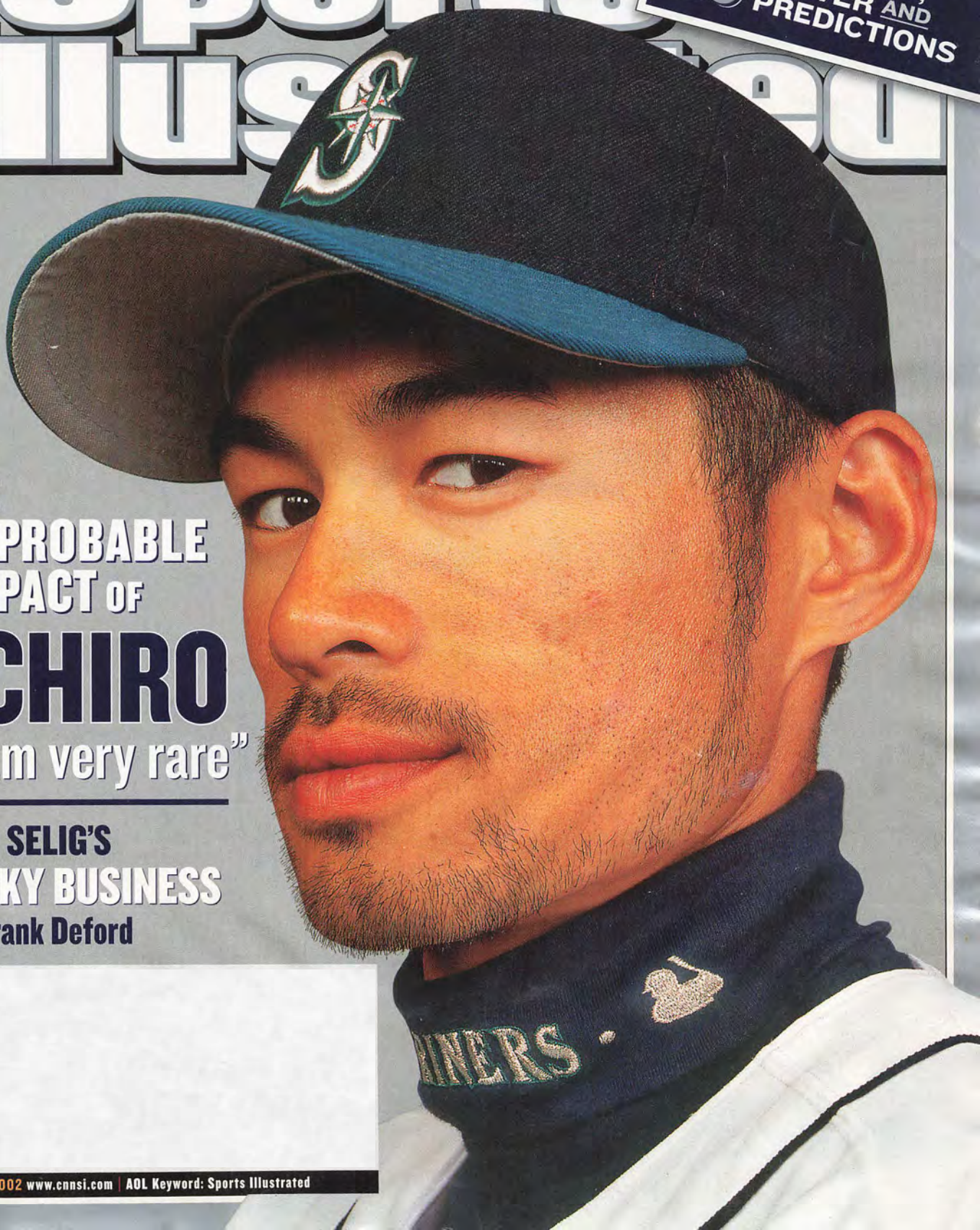
# BASEBALL MIDSEASON REPORT

Sports Illustrated

25 PAGES OF PITCHERS, POWER AND PREDICTIONS



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## BUD SELIG'S RISKY BUSINESS

by Frank Deford

JULY 8, 2002 www.cnnsi.com | AOL Keyword: Sports Illustrated

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Sports Illustrated
July 8, 2002
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PHOTOGRAPH BY HOWARD SCHATZ

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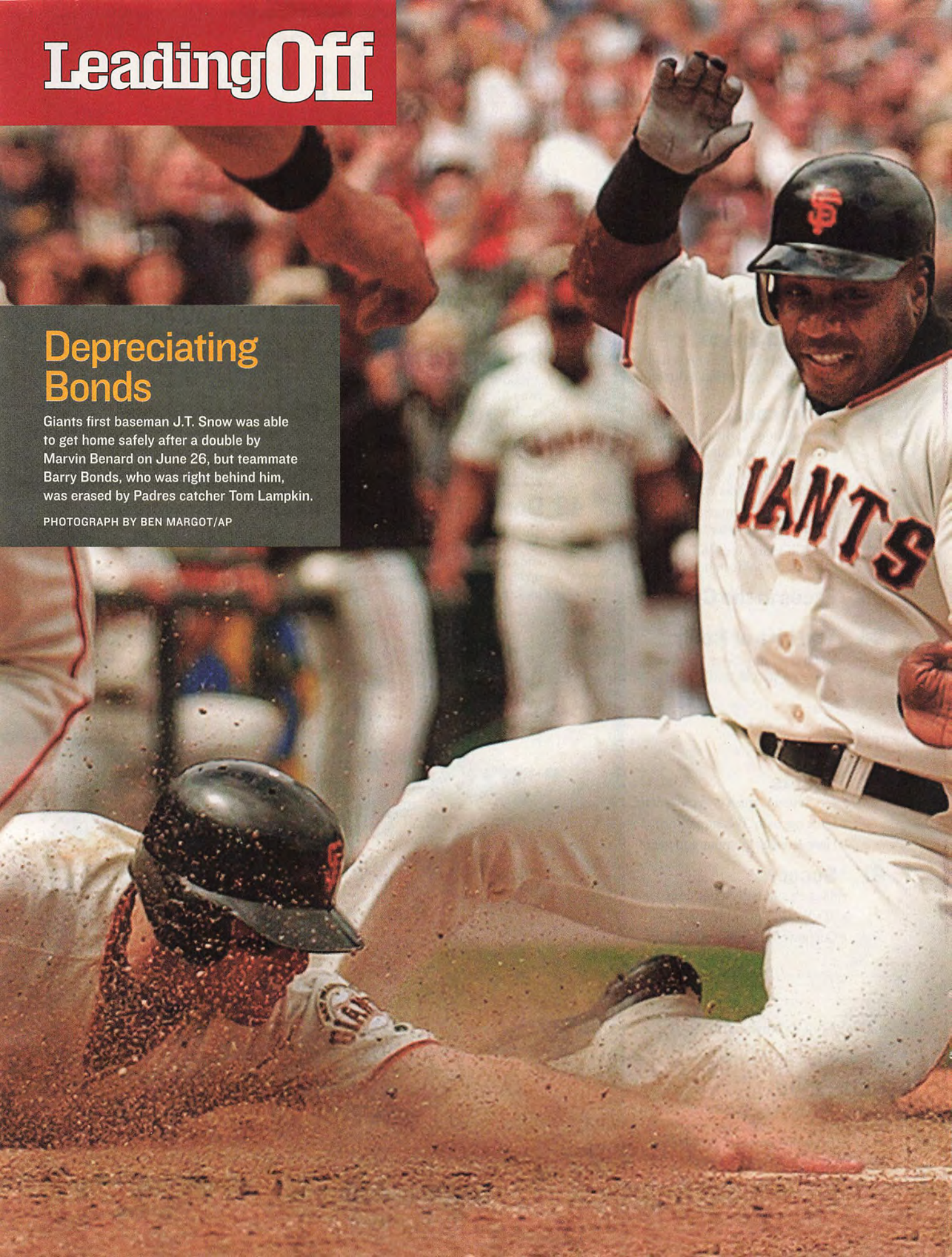


# Depreciating Bonds

Giants first baseman J.T. Snow was able to get home safely after a double by Marvin Benard on June 26, but teammate Barry Bonds, who was right behind him, was erased by Padres catcher Tom Lampkin.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN MARGOT/AP

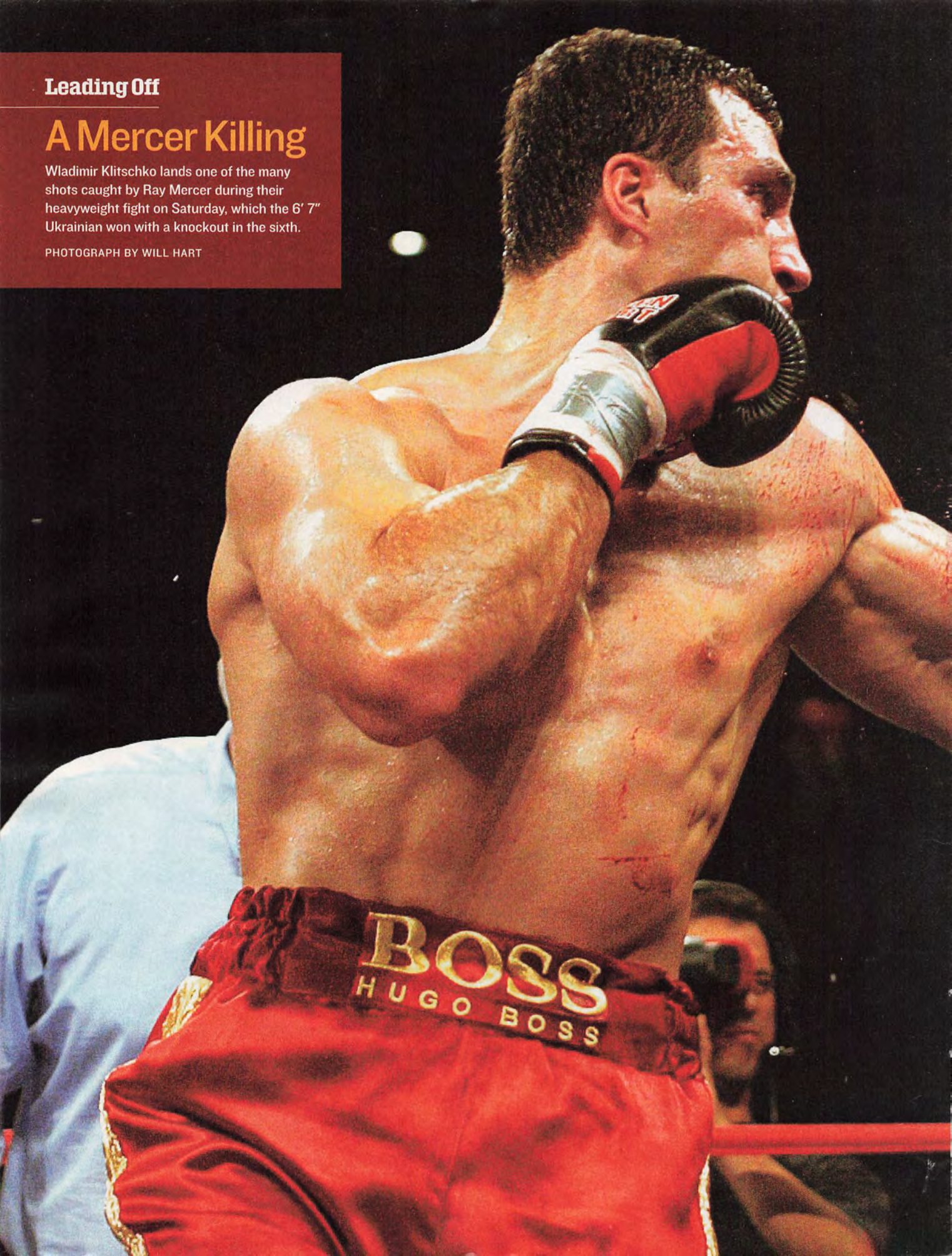
LAN KIN
25

## Leading Off

# A Mercer Killing

Wladimir Klitschko lands one of the many shots caught by Ray Mercer during their heavyweight fight on Saturday, which the 6′ 7″ Ukrainian won with a knockout in the sixth.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WILL HART



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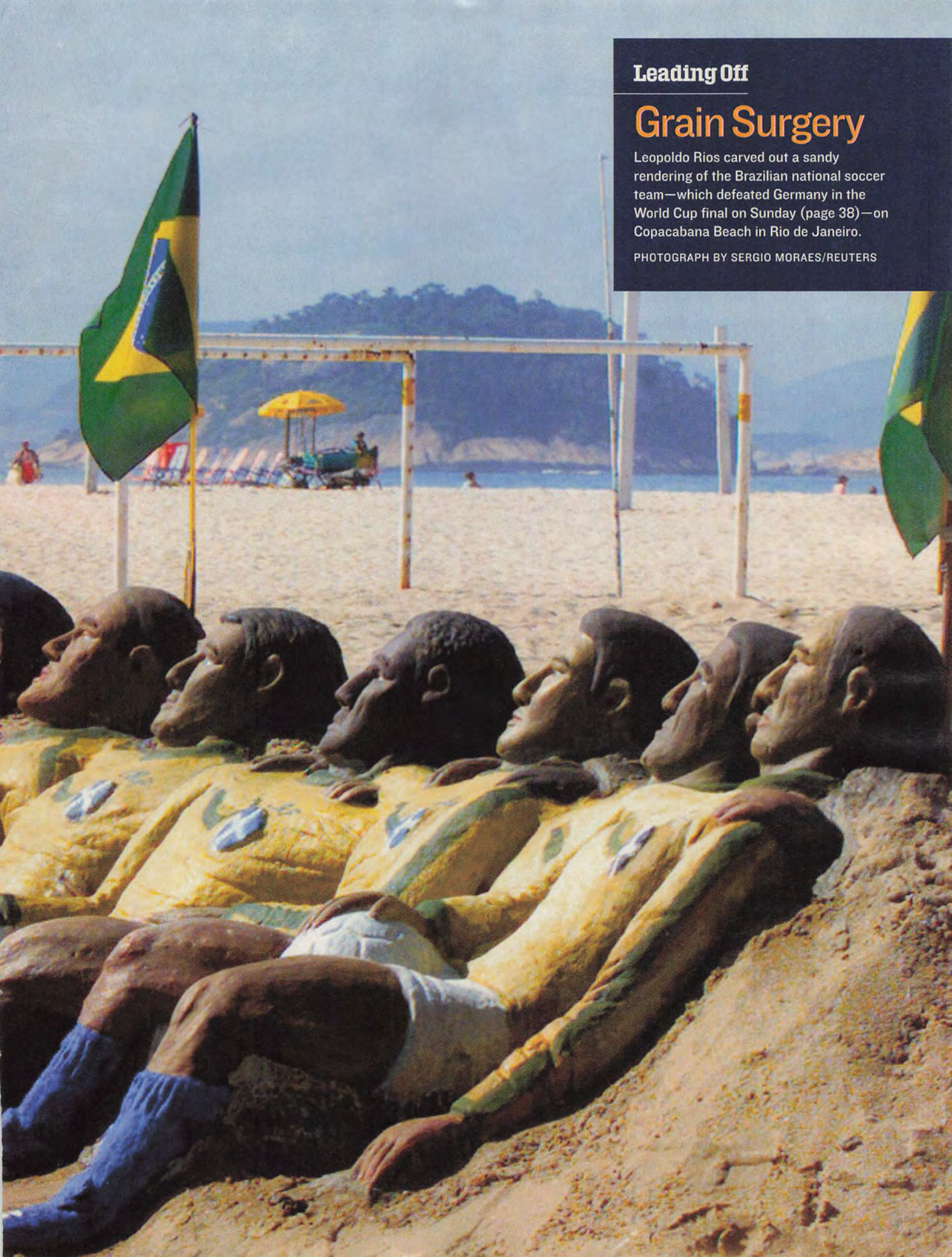
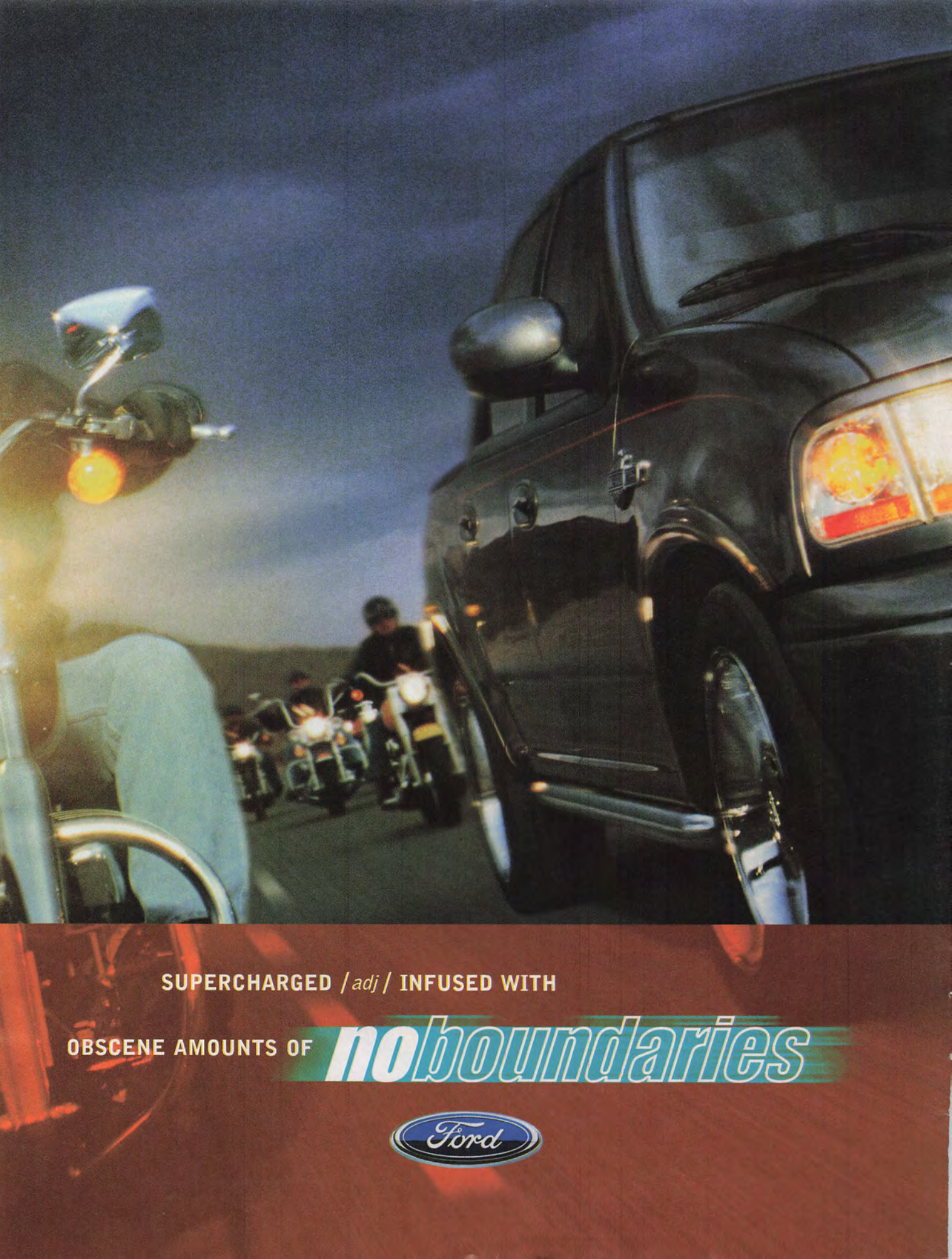


## Leading Off

# Grain Surgery

Leopoldo Rios carved out a sandy rendering of the Brazilian national soccer team—which defeated Germany in the World Cup final on Sunday (page 38)—on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGIO MORAES/REUTERS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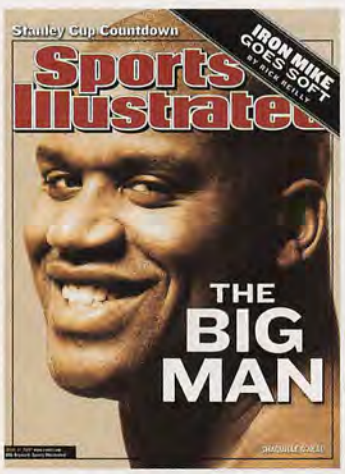
## Shaq Attack

I'm sure Shaquille O'Neal (*The Shaq Factor*, June 17) is a great guy. It's just that he is as bad for basketball as Godzilla was for the Big Apple. The referees consistently allow him to violate the rules by slamming himself against opponents with both his rear end and his elbows. With Shaq, all you get is brute force. Tell him to pick on someone his own size, like a defensive lineman.

*Paul Hurst, Plantation, Fla.*

I've just seen Shaq bulldoze his way through another playoff series; it will be the last pro basketball I'll ever watch. As for his much-hyped ability, how many shots does he make outside of five feet from the basket?

*Lew Predmore, Avon Park, Fla.*




Shaq constantly complains about the refs when he's guilty of pushing and hooking defenders who are trying to guard him. When he gets the ball down low, he very often walks or, better yet, hops with both feet while holding the ball. The way the refs treat Shaq is like Barry Bonds's getting four strikes so we can see more homers.

*David S. Henne, Florham Park, N.J.*

Jack McCallum's article reminds me why I stopped watching the NBA two years ago. The news flash that Shaq "removed the diamond studs that are in both his nipples for no particular reason" before the Finals shows just how low the sport has plummeted.

*Mori Krantz, Denver*

SI should be a part of basketball's institutional memory. To compare Shaq to Wilt Chamberlain is a real distortion. He is not stronger than Chamberlain. Yes, he weighs more, but Chamberlain didn't go through people to score or rebound. Wilt never fouled out, and I think any expert would tell you he played a clean, by-the-book game.

*Eric Lund, Greenville, Calif.*

While Shaq garners all of the accolades, Kobe Bryant, at 23, continues to impose his will on the game in a manner that only Magic, Bird and Jordan have shown before him.

*Sam Fiano, Fairfield, Conn.*

## Ralph Versus Refs

For once in my life I find myself in agreement with Ralph Nader (SCORECARD, June 17). I am amazed that there is such a blatant disregard for basic rules in the pros. Many a foul was not called on the offensive player when he definitely ran into the defensive player. Don't you think NBC wanted to avoid televising the Finals with Sacramento—a much smaller TV market than Los Angeles?

*Jerry Solzman, Louisville*

Who is Ralph Nader to criticize NBA officials when he just recently started following the game? What Nader fails to realize from watching Game 6 is that the Kings hacked the crap out of the Lakers in the fourth quarter while L.A. played good defense. Maybe if Nader focused more on the political arena and less on the NBA arena, he might actually win an election.

*Nick Larsen, Eugene, Ore.*

Dishonest officiating in the NBA? Come on, Ralph, tell us something we don't already know.

*Dave Undis, Nashville*

## Sports Unlimited

Brett Brusatori (LETTERS, June 17) would like you to cover only the "real" sports: baseball, basketball and football. I'm sure those "real" athletes would be able to appreciate the skills, strength and peak fitness needed in soccer, track and field, swimming, hockey, lacrosse, wrestling and all the other sports left out by his provincial mind-set. Keep up the coverage of all sports. After all, it is not THREE SPORTS ILLUSTRATED.

*Patti O'Connor, Warwick, N.Y.*

## Glove Story

Richard Hoffer's *Lights Out* (June 17) did a great job of explaining why people are fascinated with Mike Tyson and bored with Lennox Lewis. Hoffer failed to mention that Tyson's appeal goes beyond the carnival act, though. In his prime Tyson was the most exciting fighter ever.

*Peter Rosenberg, Bethesda, Md.*

Tyson may not have fought a stellar fight against Lewis, but he did get a victory of sorts. A true champion is a person who can rise from defeat with grace and humility, and he did just that.

*Chuck Arndell, Delanson, N.Y.*

I've come to the conclusion that Tyson's left shoulder tattoo should actually be on his backside—his "Days of Grace" are clearly behind him.

*Atli Crane, Victoria, B.C.*

## Vladdy Good Show

I'm appalled at SI's choice of Lance Berkman over Vladimir Guerrero in the All-Star ballot (INSIDE BASEBALL, June 24). It's about time that Vladdy started to get some respect. The guy bats for average and power, and he steals more than 30 bases a year. Put him in a Yankees uniform and he'd be called the best player in the game.

*Will French, Bryan, Texas*

## Eating for Sport

As the former Maine pasta champion, I must say that competitive eating is a sport (SCORECARD, June 24). Training, mental toughness and strategy all play a part in the competitions. Although my nickname is Garbage Gut, I have run the New York City Marathon in 2:48 and have a black belt in karate.

*George Glum, Pearl River, N.Y.*

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# Bob Lunn, Pro Golfer

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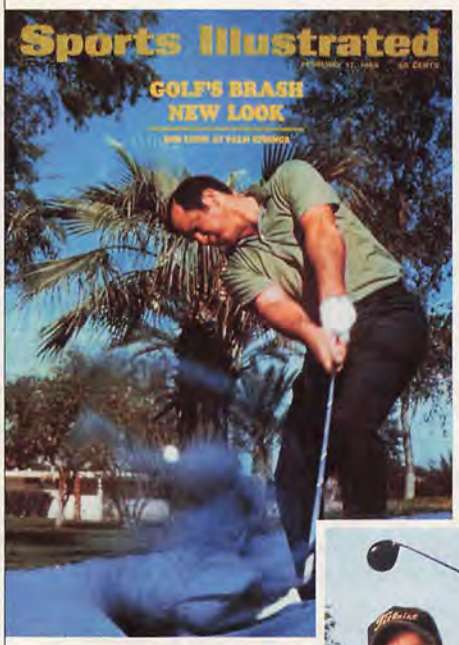


THIS COULD be the worst case of slow play in the history of golf: In 1969 young PGA Tour pro Bob Lunn was billed in SI as a "threat to the establishment," a big player (6' 1", 210 pounds) with an even bigger game who was ready to challenge Nicklaus, Palmer and Casper for golf superiority. Thirty-three years later he's still trying to rise to the challenge. A 57-year-old assistant pro at Woodbridge (Calif.) Golf and Country Club, the one-time hotshot, who won six Tour events but failed to menace golf's elite, is making one last run at glory, this time on the Senior tour. "I feel I can win again," Lunn says. "Even though it's been a long time, I still remember what it feels like to win, and I'd like to feel that again."

**A BLAST** In his second year on the Tour the 23-year-old Lunn announced his arrival by winning twice.

Lunn, 57, is an assistant pro in Woodbridge, Calif., and occasionally competes on the Senior circuit.

Lunn turned pro in 1965, a year after graduating from Abraham Lincoln High in San Francisco (the school that also produced Ken Venturi and Johnny Miller). He earned his Tour card in '66 and two years later used his fearlessness plus length and accuracy off the tee to win two tournaments. Lunn added one Tour victory in '69 and another in '70. At the season-opening Los Angeles Open in '71, Lunn, weighing 240 pounds, defeated fellow heavyweight Casper in a playoff. One newspaper headline, Lunn recalls, referred to the shootout as the BATTLE OF THE BULGE, and that convinced him to go on a diet. Over the next three months he lost 70 pounds—and his swing. "I lost too much weight too fast," says Lunn, who weighs 205 now.

A freak injury four years later knocked him off the Tour. While hitting a tee shot in the Memphis Classic, Lunn felt something snap in his left wrist and was unable to swing a golf club. He didn't play for the rest of the year as doctors attempted to diagnose the injury. Lunn says they never did. A year later the pain mysteriously went away, but his game didn't come back, and he left the Tour for good in 1990 with career earnings of $275,902.

Lunn has worked off and on for 22 years at Woodbridge, giving lessons, running the pro shop and performing other duties at the 600-member club. In his free time he works on his own game. Lunn's best finish in 56 Senior tour events is 34th, in 1995, but he hasn't entered more than five Senior tournaments in a year since '99. He's scheduled to make his first Senior appearance this year in next month's Novell Utah Shootout.

The golfing establishment is still waiting to hear from him. "Why should I stop playing competitively?" Lunn asks. "Many people retire to play golf, but I'm in it already. I'm not done with that part of my career yet."

*—Gene Menez*

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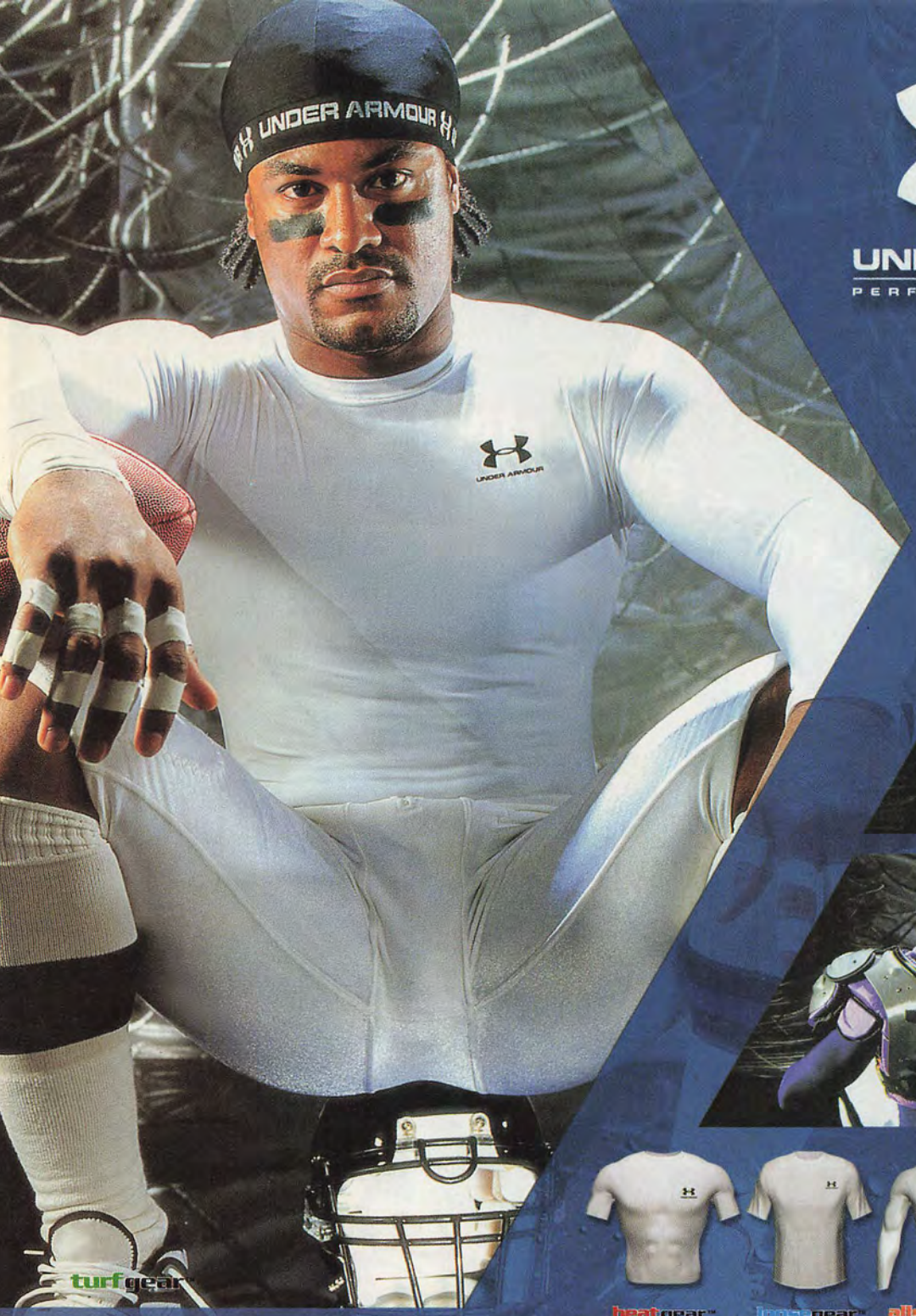


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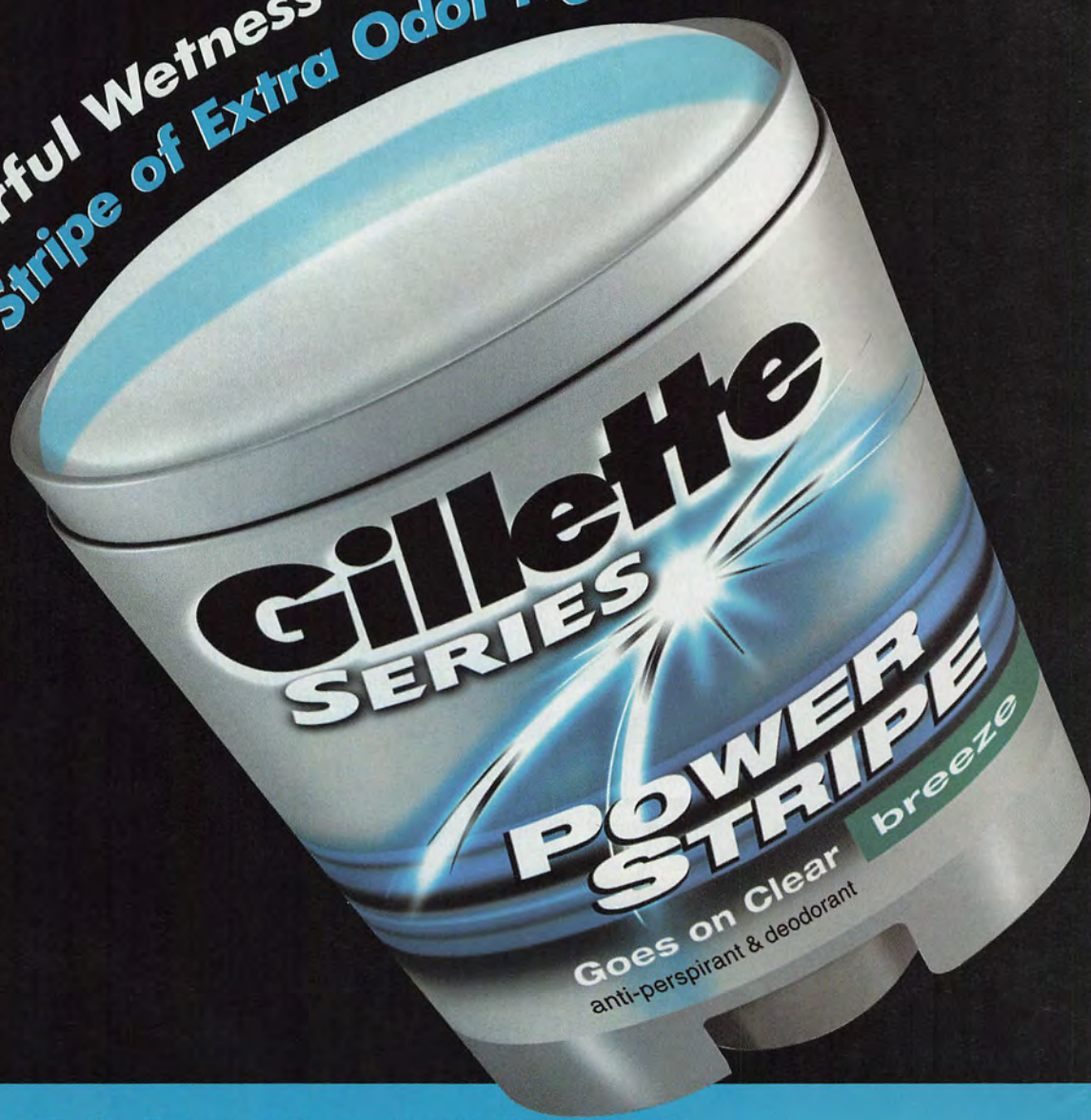


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# Running Like Crazy

by Steve Rushin

ANY DINK can run a marathon. Oprah has. Al Gore has. I, for pity's sake, have run two marathons. But Jerry Dunn is a real runner. In the calendar year of 1993 he ran 104 marathons. Seven years later Dunn, "feeling frisky," ran 200 marathons, or roughly four a week. "The first question I get," says Dunn, a slot-machine attendant with flexible hours at the Four Aces casino in Deadwood, S.Dak., "is, 'Are you crazy?' " The answer, emphatically, is yes.

Perhaps you dream of running Boston. In 1996 Dunn ran the historic 26.2-mile route from Hopkinton to Boylston Street 26 times. *On 26 consecutive days.* In '98 he ran the original route of the New York City Marathon 28 times in the 28 days before *that* race, and then ran the official marathon on race day. "I was," says Dunn, unnecessarily, "sore the whole time."

Long before Forrest Gump, he was Sorest Rump, running alone across America from San Francisco to Washington in a 104-day span, averaging 30 miles a day, for six days a week, in 1991. "I stopped drinking after my first marathon, in 1982," says Dunn, a 56-year-old ex-bartender and recovering alcoholic. "The piece of my personality that used to be Substance Addiction turned into Running Addiction. And while it's a positive addiction, I do have to monitor it. Though you might not think I've monitored it well."

*Guinness World Records* confers a strange dignity on fat twins and multifootlong-fingernailed fakirs. But it shuns Dunn, whose runs are all the more impressive for being unofficial. Huffing bus fumes, he is never wrapped, at race's end, in a foil blanket like a baked potato. "I'm just a lone runner dodging traffic," says Dunn, whose best official time is 3:23, at Chicago in 1985, but who now requires five hours to cover a marathon course. Which is hardly necessary, when you consider that this human swizzle stick, six feet tall, 150 pounds, could much more easily be faxed from start to finish.

While most runners "taper," radically decreasing their mileage in the days before a race, Dunn runs daily marathons to prepare for marathons. In his annus mirabilis of 2000, when he laid waste to 20 pairs of shoes, Dunn ran marathon courses in New York City (nine straight days), Providence (six days), Philadelphia (six), Tampa (10), Boston (17), Nashville (three), San Diego (16 days, and four more days later in the year), another San Diego course (five), Indianapolis (17), St. Louis (six), Chicago (six), Las Vegas (16), Los Angeles (12), Cincinnati (14), Duluth (12), San Francisco (nine), Salt Lake City (nine), Bismarck, N.Dak. (eight), Dayton (six), Minneapolis–St. Paul (eight) and Schmiedefeld, Germany (once), almost always ending his binges by running the route on race day, when volunteers were there to hand him water.

On nonrace days he creates his own aid stations. During runs in Los Angeles, Dunn has had coffee and toast at the Olympic Cafe near the starting line, doughnuts at the Winchell's at mile 17 and a banana from the Asian fruit stand near mile marker 23. To recover, he goes to bed. "I've heard of people standing in 55-gallon drums of ice water," he says. "But I could never do that." No, for Dunn, who once ran a marathon in Omsk, Siberia, that would be torture.

Running is bliss, even for those lightweights who run only, say, one marathon a week. "I've run in snowstorms, hailstorms, lightning," says Norm Frank, 71, of Rochester, N.Y. "I've run marathons at the North Pole, the Berlin Wall and along the original marathon route from Marathon to Athens in Greece. I was supposed to run at the Panama Canal from the Pacific to the Atlantic but got badly sunburned down there and had to pull out." Even without that race, Frank last weekend in upstate New York ran his 781st official marathon, which is merely the North American record. "There's a fella in Germany who's run more," says Frank, sighing like an accordion.

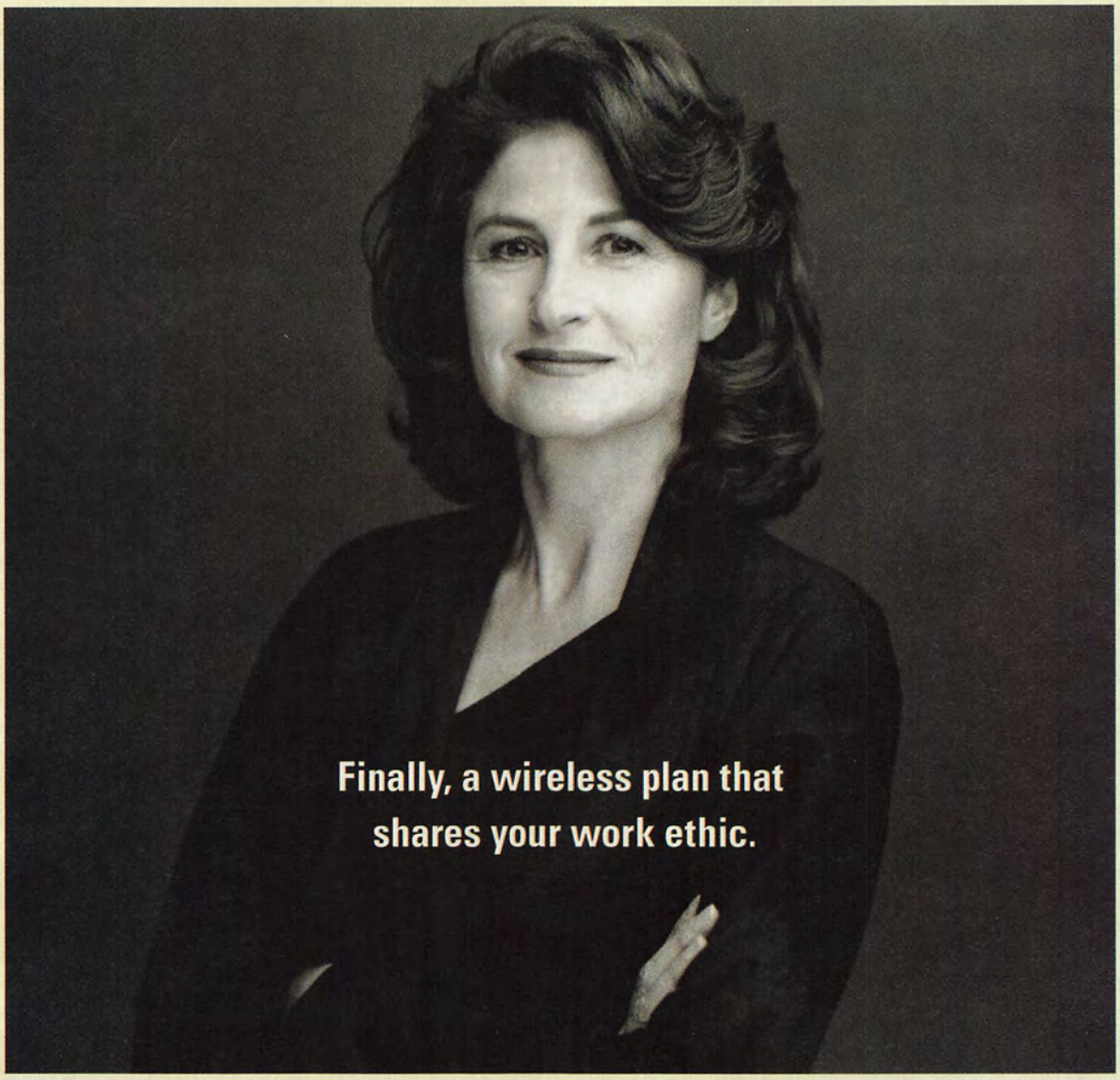
> Long before Forrest Gump, Jerry Dunn was Sorest Rump, running alone across America.

The proprietor of Marathon Lawn Service, Frank ran his first marathon at age 37, in Boston, and 33 years later, after running in Boise, Idaho, had marathoned in each of the 50 states. (His PR is 3:20, but he now runs 6:00s.) The second weekend of December, in Huntsville, Ala., the 6' 2", 170-pounder plans to complete his 800th career marathon or ultramarathon. He will then have lapped the earth, running roughly the length of the Equator.

Says Frank, "When I started, before Frank Shorter ran in the Olympics, I had all kinds of problems with dogs chasing me." But when Shorter and others made running cool, in the '70s, even the dogs laid off, switching exclusively to mailmen. It was then, in 1975, that Jerry Dunn, at the prodding of a lifeguard friend, ran a half-mile on Sarasota Beach in Florida. A young Orson Welles had tasted his first Ring Ding.

Twenty-seven years and four wives later, Dunn is still running. On Jan. 8, 1995, Dunn paused near the nine-mile mark of the Walt Disney World Marathon in Orlando to marry, in front of Cinderella's Castle, fellow runner Elaine Doll. He wore a tux, she wore a gown. "I like to say," says the groom, who settled with Doll in Spearfish, S.Dak., "we've been running around together ever since." Dunn smiles, unembarrassed that his jokes are corny. And clearly content that his feet are, too. □

PETER GREGOIRE

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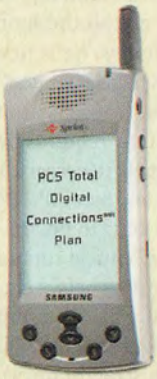


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"He's pretty old, but it makes for an interesting story." —SPLENDID SPLINTER II?, PAGE 26

Scorecard

Edited by Richard O'Brien and Richard Deitsch

# Feud for Thought

## Baseball chemistry is a complex science: As some recent lapses of team spirit show, a good dugout dustup or clubhouse clash can be a catalyst for success

Until June 25 neither Roberto Alomar nor Roger Cedeño had done much for the Mets this year. The inability of the two off-season free-agent acquisitions to set the table was a large part of the reason that New York's offense had gone hungry. Then, before a division showdown with the Braves, they made what could turn out to be their biggest contribution to the Mets' cause all year: They got into a fight in the clubhouse.

The spat started with Cedeño's teasing Alomar about the picture on his 1988 rookie baseball card: Alomar is sporting a pencil-thin mustache that makes him look rather like '80s pop star El DeBarge. Alomar took exception, and the pair had to be separated by Mo Vaughn. Alomar then went out and homered in the first inning, and Cedeño sparked a Mets rally in the second with a single and a stolen base. Clearly pleased, manager Bobby Valentine dismissed the imbroglio that preceded the 7–4 win as "a little Latin yelling." He added, "We were up for the game. There was a lot of fluids going."

Well, if there's one thing good teams seem to have in common, it's that they have more fluids going than Patrick Ewing wearing a wool topcoat in a sauna. Two days after *l'affaire* Alomar, longtime nemeses Barry Bonds and Jeff Kent nearly came to blows in the Giants' dugout during a win over the Padres; each later homered in the game. This is of course nothing new: Oakland pitchers Blue Moon Odom and Rollie Fingers battled before Game 1 of the 1974 World Series, in which the A's beat the Dodgers in five games. Three years later Reggie Jackson went from nearly smacking Bronx Zookeeper Billy Martin to smacking three home runs against the Dodgers to win the Series. In '97 Kevin Mitchell pushed Chad Curtis into a Ping-Pong table during a dispute over music in the Indians' clubhouse; the Tribe came within one out of its first World Series title in 49 years. Two years later Curtis, a serial feuder, ripped Yankees teammate Derek Jeter when the shortstop chatted up Alex Rodriguez during a bench-clearing brouhaha with the Mariners; the Yanks went on to become world champs.

CHARLIE POWELL

**WHO NEEDS HARMONY?** Three of the four players involved in intrateam squabbles last week immediately hit home runs.

After Alomar and Cedeño followed their tiff with solid performances, Mets G.M. Steve Phillips joked, "I might instigate something, kind of a team brawl before the game." Here's a look at some equally tense situations that could soon erupt and fuel history-making second-half surges.

• *Scott Rolen vs. Everybody* The refusal by the Phillies' former golden boy to re-sign has led to strained relationships with the fans, media and his teammates, one of whom anonymously called him a "clubhouse cancer." The last time that Phillies players had a common enemy—their manager, Dallas Green, in 1980—they won the World Series.

• *John Rocker vs. Jamie Quirk* The Rangers' interim pitching coach found himself on the business end of a Rocker hissy fit last week when manager Jerry Narron pulled the reliever after just one batter.

• *Richard Hidalgo vs. Jimy Williams* The Astros' rightfielder didn't take kindly to being benched last month by the ever-grumpy manager. Hidalgo chucked his bat bag across the clubhouse and broke a chair upon learning that he had been removed from the lineup.

With this kind of dissension these teams should get hot soon. And a quick note to all those general managers whose teams aren't mentioned: Chad Curtis is available. —*Mark Bechtel*

# The Real Soccer War

## When Nike and Adidas compete, low numbers are not the problem

One hot rumor just before the World Cup final said that referee Pierluigi Collina would do his best to make sure Germany won. The reason? That should be obvious to anyone who's seen the ubiquitous Adidas TV spots featuring the bald-headed Collina. The ref worked for Adidas, the company that sponsors the German team! Never mind that FIFA had approved Collina's appearance in the campaign. According to conspiracy theorists, he'd surely work against the Brazilian team, sponsored by Nike. After all, this wasn't just the most important soccer game of the 21st century—it was a showdown between two companies battling for $2.5 billion in worldwide soccer business. Of course, in the end Ni . . . , uh, Brazil prevailed. But in boardrooms, design studios and sporting goods stores, Nike versus Adidas has only just started to get interesting.

**HEAD GAMES** Ref Collina (left) appears in Adidas ads with FIFA's blessing.

The heated rivalry is something few experts could have foreseen as recently as 1994. Back then Adidas, a 54-year-old company headquartered in Germany, was the undisputed ruler of the soccer world. Meanwhile back in Beaverton, Ore., Nike reflected America's indifference to the sport, spending a mere $5 million a year on marketing and bringing in $40 million in revenue. In recent years, though, the company has changed direction as quickly as DaMarcus Beasley shaking a defender. Nike spent a reported $155 million this year for World Cup marketing, compared with $40 million from Adidas. In August, Nike takes over merchandising for England's Manchester United, arguably the world's most popular soccer club.

Nike embraced soccer when it realized that the sport helps it get a foothold overseas for its entire product line. The 30-year-old company, which generated $9.9 billion in revenue in 2001, expects to do more than half its business outside the U.S. for the first time next year, and while Adidas is still No. 1 in soccer with $700 million in sales annually, Lehman Brothers analyst Robert Drbul predicts that Nike will eventually take the top spot. Sponsoring the World Cup winner gives its efforts "a sense of authenticity," Drbul says. Still, Adidas, with $6 billion in 2001 revenue, built its business on soccer and is intent on being No. 1 for the 2006 World Cup, which will be held on its home turf. Anything else would be unthinkable—but then, not long ago, so was the U.S. team's reaching the quarterfinals.

*—Bill Syken*

# GO FIGURE

**42,457** Persons in attendance at Wimbledon on June 26, a record for the 116-year history of the tournament.

**$391 million** Value of the New York Mets as set by appraiser Robert Starkey in April. Co-owner Nelson Doubleday, who last October agreed to sell his half of the team to co-owner Fred Wilpon at the price determined by Starkey, said on June 25 that he will file a lawsuit contesting the validity of the price.

**19** Members of last year's 85-man Northern Arizona football roster who have been convicted of crimes, most of which involved underage drinking, according to *The Arizona Republic*.

**12** Strokes Seve Ballesteros took on the par-5 18th hole at last week's Irish Open. He was later disqualified from the tournament for mistakenly signing a 10 for the hole.

**1,350** Miles between Olympic Stadium in Montreal and Boomer's Bar & Grill, a Kansas City, Mo., watering hole owned by Expos fan Bill Rumbaugh, who bought $4,500 worth of ads on Team 990 radio, in Quebec, as a way of supporting the team.

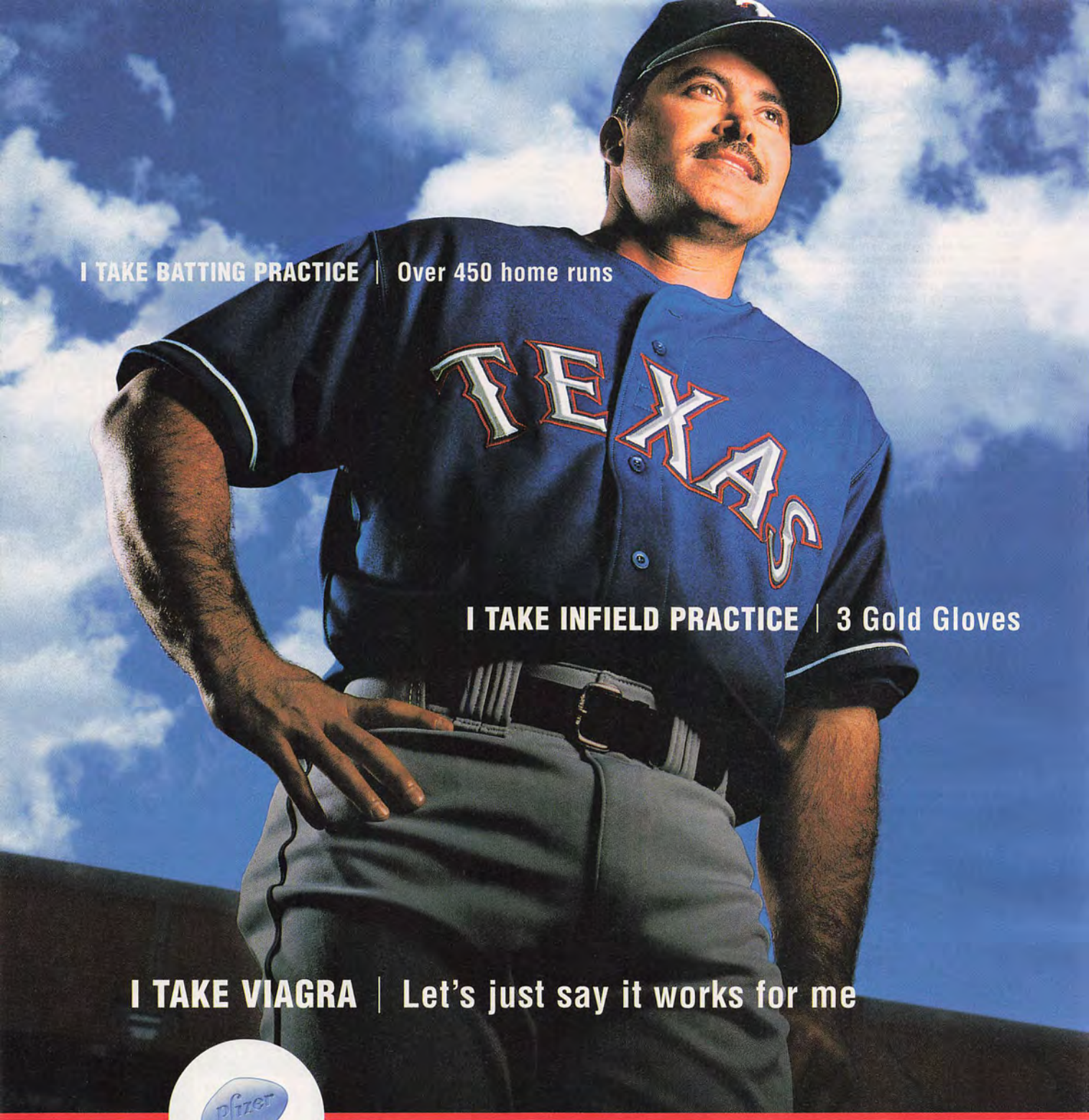
# BODY IMAGE PREGNANT ATHLETES WHO STAY IN THE GAME

Being pregnant hasn't kept racing's richest mare, Spain, out of the running. On June 15, about four weeks after she was bred to the leading stallion Storm Cat, Spain won the Fleur de Lis Handicap at Churchill Downs by 3¼ lengths. Last Saturday the 5-year-old mare finished third in the Molly Pitcher Breeders' Cup Handicap at Monmouth Park in Oceanport, N.J., bringing her lifetime earnings to $3,540,542. "If the filly or mare is in racing condition while she is bred," says Richard Tramp, a veterinarian with Exclusively Equine Reproduction in Valley Center, Calif., "she can go on for about six months."

**MOTHER SUPERIOR** Both Spain and Granger excelled while expecting.

Humans, too, have competed successfully while pregnant, though usually woman athletes stay on the sidelines after their first trimester. Some examples of athletes with a baby on board: Margaret Court, who reached the final of Wimbledon in 1971; pitcher Michele Granger, who won two games in 1996 for the gold-medal-winning U.S. Olympic softball team; Britain's Alison Hargreaves, who climbed the 5,000-foot North Wall of the Eiger in the Swiss Alps in 1989; two-time U.S. Olympic hockey player Jenny Potter (then Jenny Schmidgall), who took regular shifts for Minnesota-Duluth as a junior in 2000; and Irish distance runner Sonia O'Sullivan, who won the Tesco Women's Great North run in 2001.

KAI PFAFFENBACH/REUTERS (COLLINA); AMY SANCETTA/AP (GERMANY VS. BRAZIL); MATT MOYER (SPAIN); JOHN IACONO (GRANGER)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*Please see patient summary of information for* VIAGRA (25-mg, 50-mg, 100-mg) *tablets on the following page.*

VIAGRA is indicated for the treatment of erectile dysfunction. Remember that no medicine is for everyone. If you use nitrate drugs, often used to control chest pain (also known as angina), don't take VIAGRA. This combination could cause your blood pressure to drop to an unsafe or life-threatening level. Discuss your general health status with your doctor to ensure that you are healthy enough to engage in sexual activity. If you experience chest pain, nausea, or any other discomforts during sex or an erection that lasts longer than 4 hours, seek immediate medical help. The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, facial flushing, and upset stomach. Less commonly, bluish vision, blurred vision, or sensitivity to light may briefly occur.

**PATIENT SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ABOUT**

**VIAGRA**
*(sildenafil citrate) tablets*

**This summary contains important information about VIAGRA®.** It is not meant to take the place of your doctor's instructions. Read this information carefully before you start taking VIAGRA. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you do not understand any of this information or if you want to know more about VIAGRA.

This medicine can help many men when it is used as prescribed by their doctors. However, VIAGRA is not for everyone. It is intended for use only by men who have a condition called erectile dysfunction. **VIAGRA must never be used by men who are taking medicines that contain nitrates of any kind, at any time. This includes nitroglycerin. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe or life threatening level.**

### What Is VIAGRA?

VIAGRA is a pill used to treat erectile dysfunction (impotence) in men. It can help many men who have erectile dysfunction get and keep an erection when they become sexually excited (stimulated).

You will not get an erection just by taking this medicine. VIAGRA helps a man with erectile dysfunction get an erection only when he is sexually excited.

### How Sex Affects the Body

When a man is sexually excited, the penis rapidly fills with more blood than usual. The penis then expands and hardens. This is called an erection. After the man is done having sex, this extra blood flows out of the penis back into the body. The erection goes away. If an erection lasts for a long time (more than 6 hours), it can permanently damage your penis. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have a prolonged erection that lasts more than 4 hours.

Some conditions and medicines interfere with this natural erection process. The penis cannot fill with enough blood. The man cannot have an erection. This is called erectile dysfunction if it becomes a frequent problem.

During sex, your heart works harder. Therefore sexual activity may not be advisable for people who have heart problems. Before you start any treatment for erectile dysfunction, ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex. If you have chest pains, dizziness or nausea during sex, stop having sex and immediately tell your doctor you have had this problem.

### How VIAGRA Works

VIAGRA enables many men with erectile dysfunction to respond to sexual stimulation. When a man is sexually excited, VIAGRA helps the penis fill with enough blood to cause an erection. After sex is over, the erection goes away.

### VIAGRA Is Not for Everyone

As noted above (*How Sex Affects the Body*), ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough for sexual activity.

**If you take any medicines that contain nitrates–either regularly or as needed–you should never take VIAGRA.** If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine or recreational drug containing nitrates, your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe level. You could get dizzy, faint, or even have a heart attack or stroke. Nitrates are found in many prescription medicines that are used to treat angina (chest pain due to heart disease) such as:

- nitroglycerin (sprays, ointments, skin patches or pastes, and tablets that are swallowed or dissolved in the mouth)
- isosorbide mononitrate and isosorbide dinitrate (tablets that are swallowed, chewed, or dissolved in the mouth)

Nitrates are also found in recreational drugs such as amyl nitrate or nitrite ("poppers"). If you are not sure if any of your medicines contain nitrates, or if you do not understand what nitrates are, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

VIAGRA is only for patients with erectile dysfunction. VIAGRA is not for newborns, children, or women. Do not let anyone else take your VIAGRA. VIAGRA must be used only under a doctor's supervision.

### What VIAGRA Does Not Do

- VIAGRA does not cure erectile dysfunction. It is a treatment for erectile dysfunction.
- VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from getting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV–the virus that causes AIDS.
- VIAGRA is not a hormone or an aphrodisiac.

### What To Tell Your Doctor Before You Begin VIAGRA

Only your doctor can decide if VIAGRA is right for you. VIAGRA can cause mild, temporary lowering of your blood pressure. You will need to have a thorough medical exam to diagnose your erectile dysfunction and to find out if you can safely take VIAGRA alone or with your other medicines. Your doctor should determine if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex.

Be sure to tell your doctor if you:

- have ever had any heart problems (e.g., angina, chest pain, heart failure, irregular heart beats, or heart attack)
- have ever had a stroke
- have low or high blood pressure
- have a rare inherited eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa
- have ever had any kidney problems
- have ever had any liver problems
- have ever had any blood problems, including sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- are allergic to sildenafil or any of the other ingredients of VIAGRA tablets
- have a deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or ever had an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- have stomach ulcers or any types of bleeding problems
- are taking any other medicines

### VIAGRA and Other Medicines

Some medicines can change the way VIAGRA works. Tell your doctor about **any medicines** you are taking. Do not start or stop taking any medicines before checking with your doctor or pharmacist. This includes prescription and nonprescription medicines or remedies. Remember, VIAGRA should never be used with medicines that contain nitrates (see *VIAGRA Is Not for Everyone*). If you are taking a protease inhibitor, your dose may be adjusted (please see *Finding the Right Dose for You.*) VIAGRA should not be used with any other medical treatments that cause erections. These treatments include pills, medicines that are injected or inserted into the penis, implants or vacuum pumps.

### Finding the Right Dose for You

VIAGRA comes in different doses (25 mg, 50 mg and 100 mg). If you do not get the results you expect, talk with your doctor. You and your doctor can determine the dose that works best for you.

- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor prescribes.
- If you think you need a larger dose of VIAGRA, check with your doctor.
- VIAGRA should not be taken more than once a day.

If you are older than age 65, or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg) of VIAGRA. If you are taking protease inhibitors, such as for the treatment of HIV, your doctor may recommend a 25 mg dose and may limit you to a maximum single dose of 25 mg of VIAGRA in a 48 hour period.

### How To Take VIAGRA

Take VIAGRA about one hour before you plan to have sex. Beginning in about 30 minutes and for up to 4 hours, VIAGRA can help you get an erection if you are sexually excited. If you take VIAGRA after a high-fat meal (such as a cheeseburger and french fries), the medicine may take a little longer to start working. VIAGRA can help you get an erection when you are sexually excited. You will not get an erection just by taking the pill.

### Possible Side Effects

Like all medicines, VIAGRA can cause some side effects. These effects are usually mild to moderate and usually don't last longer than a few hours. Some of these side effects are more likely to occur with higher doses. The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, flushing of the face, and upset stomach. Less common side effects that may occur are temporary changes in color vision (such as trouble telling the difference between blue and green objects or having a blue color tinge to them), eyes being more sensitive to light, or blurred vision.

In rare instances, men have reported an erection that lasts many hours. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. If not treated right away, permanent damage to your penis could occur (see *How Sex Affects the Body*).

Heart attack, stroke, irregular heart beats, and death have been reported rarely in men taking VIAGRA. Most, but not all, of these men had heart problems before taking this medicine. It is not possible to determine whether these events were directly related to VIAGRA.

VIAGRA may cause other side effects besides those listed on this sheet. If you want more information or develop any side effects or symptoms you are concerned about, call your doctor.

### Accidental Overdose

In case of accidental overdose, call your doctor right away.

### Storing VIAGRA

Keep VIAGRA out of the reach of children. Keep VIAGRA in its original container. Store at room temperature, 59°-86°F (15°-30°C).

### For More Information on VIAGRA

VIAGRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction. Only your doctor can decide if it is right for you. This sheet is only a summary. If you have any questions or want more information about VIAGRA, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, visit www.viagra.com, or call 1-888-4VIAGRA.

Rev. 4, June 1999

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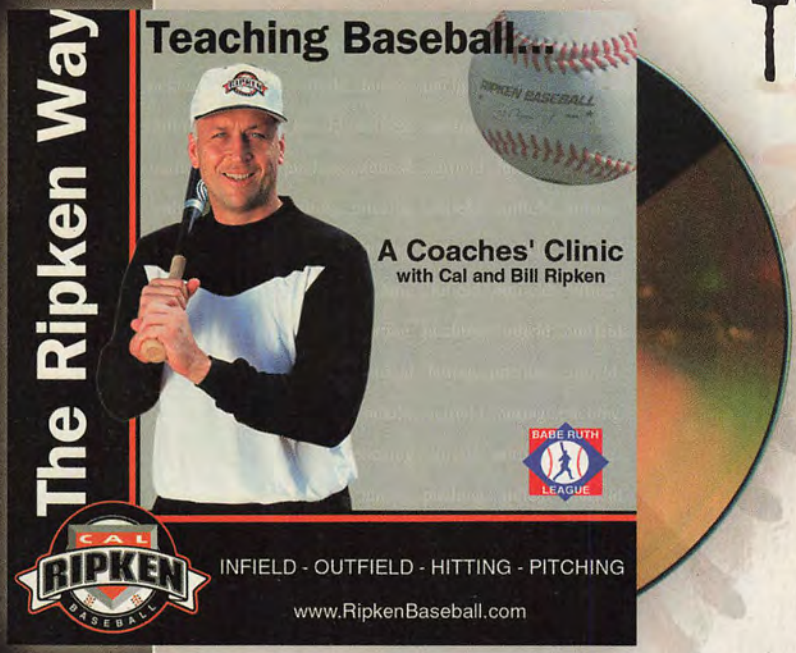


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# Tarnished Medals?

## The USOC's former drug czar says he's ready to name names

**FORCED OUT?** Exum says USOC officials encouraged and covered up drug use.

Somewhere among the nearly 100 boxes of papers in his possession, Wade Exum may have a smoking gun: a list of U.S. athletes who Exum, the United States Olympic Committee's director of drug control administration for nine years, claims tested positive for banned substances (ranging from stimulants to steroids, in and out of competition) between 1984 and 2000 but were never named or punished by the USOC. In July 2000, a month after he resigned, allegedly under pressure, Exum filed a federal lawsuit against the committee claiming that its members discriminated against him because he is black and hampered his antidrug efforts. He is expected to reveal the identities of the implicated athletes after the trial date is set, most likely later this month in Denver.

In the lawsuit Exum claims the USOC had encouraged "the use of performance enhancing drugs or doping methods" and "thrown roadblocks in the path of anti-doping enforcement." He declined, through his lawyer, John Pineau, to comment to SI, but he told *The Times* of London last week that medal winners from the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and the '96 Atlanta Games were among the athletes listed.

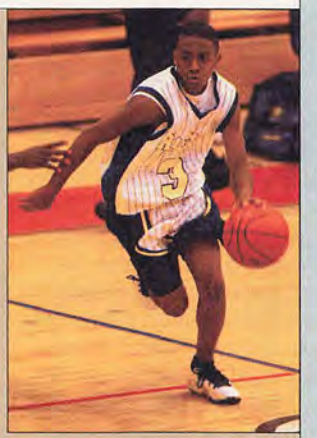
If the case proceeds, the release of at least 11,000 pages of documents should clear up many of the questions raised by Exum's claims. How many, if any, unreported positives were there? How many were from subsequent medal winners? Did athletes on his list have prior exemptions for banned substances because of medical considerations? Does the list include positives for just initial A samples or also the confirming B samples? Did the USOC systematically suppress the results of damning drug tests or was it protecting the rights of athletes whose results were overturned because of legitimate technicalities?

On Monday, USOC spokesman Mike Moran said the committee denies "any coverups or misrepresentations on our part in the drug-testing procedure." Moran added, "This man asked us, through our attorneys, for $5.5 million to keep silent. We have nothing to hide."

*—Brian Cazeneuve*

# FAMILY MATTERS HEIR JORDAN?

There was Jordan driving the lane, then coolly sinking a jumper while hanging in midair. But this was neither Chicago Stadium nor the MCI Center. This was the Wooddale High gymnasium in Memphis on June 24, and that was Jeffrey Michael Jordan, elder son of You Know Who, playing in the AAU 13-and-under national tournament. The Air apparent, a 13-year-old, 5′ 9″ swingman, debuted with a 13-point game as his Deerfield (Ill.) Rising Stars fell 71–51 to Virginia's Prince William Pacers. Jeffrey (whose 11-year-old brother, Marcus, also plays AAU ball) added 18 points in the last of his four games. "He has a decent body but didn't have unbelievable hops or anything," said Ron Higgins, a sportswriter for Memphis's *The Commercial Appeal*. Still, history shows the danger of underestimating a Jordan. "You can't forget," said Higgins, "that his dad was cut from his high school team in the ninth grade." *—Martin Bell*



**LIKE MIKE** Jordan's son Jeffrey mirrored some of Dad's moves in Memphis.

# THE BLOTTER

**Peeved** Rangers first baseman Rafael Palmeiro, the Viagra pitchman, after an organist at Pittsburgh's PNC Park played *Pop Goes the Weasel* and the theme from *The Woody Woodpecker Show* when Palmeiro went to bat during the June 21–23 series. "It's really not a joking matter," said Palmeiro. "Whether it's hemorrhoids or hair loss, none of us is perfect."

**Condemned** By Pakistan's Sports Board, tennis player Aisam-Ul-Haq Qureshi, 22, a Pakistani Muslim, for partnering at Wimbledon with Amir Hadad, an Israeli Jew. The duo lost in the third round on Monday.

**Hired** By Southeastern Louisiana, football coach Hal Mumme, who led Kentucky to a 20–26 record, including back-to-back bowl games in 1998 and 1999, before resigning. The NCAA later placed Kentucky on probation for three years and stripped the program of 19 scholarships for more than three dozen violations committed during Mumme's tenure.

**Resigned** As wrestling coach at Avon (Ind.) High School, Aron Bright, 31, who admitted that he bit off the head of a live sparrow in front of several team members last December in an effort to fire them up for a meet. He will remain at the school as a history and geography teacher.

**Died** Of lung cancer, Jay Berwanger, 88, the first winner of the Heisman Trophy. Known as the One-Man Gang at the University of Chicago, the 6′ 1″, 195-pound halfback, punter and linebacker received what was then called the Downtown Athletic Club Award in 1935 for his two-way excellence. (The honor was renamed the following year for DAC director of athletics John W. Heisman.) Berwanger was the first player selected, by the Philadelphia Eagles, in the inaugural NFL draft, but he turned his back on a pro career after the Bears, who'd traded for his rights, refused his demand for $25,000 over two years. He served as a Naval aviator instructor during World War II before founding Jay Berwanger Inc., a manufacturer of plastic and sponge-rubber strips for car doors and farm machinery.

Berwanger

DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP (EXUM); BILL ROSS/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL (JORDAN); BETTMANN/CORBIS

# Splendid Splinter II?

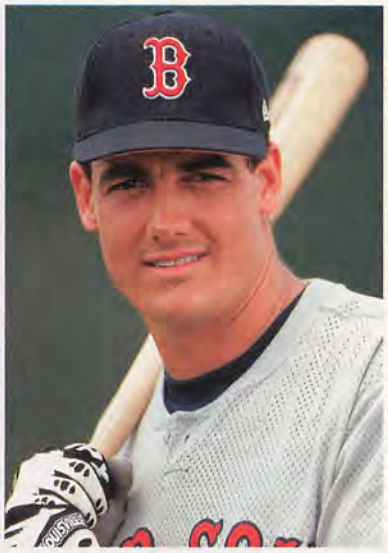
## John Henry Williams, the Kid's kid, enters rookie ball at 33

The prospect of seeing the son of a living legend was enough to draw only 15 fans (about five more than usual) to a remote diamond in a deep corner of the Lee County Sports Complex in Fort Myers, Fla. The occasion, last Saturday, was a Gulf Coast League game between the Twins and the Red Sox, but the center of attention was John Henry Williams, the 33-year-old son of Ted Williams, who is taking time off from his career as the principal caretaker of his 83-year-old father to attempt to break into rookie ball. Alas, John Henry sat this game out, nursing a chest bruise he suffered when he ran into a fence while fielding a pop-up in practice the day before. "He's pretty old," said John Cott, 59, a retired schoolteacher who was attending his first GCL game, "but it makes for an interesting story."

Cott's reaction was a bit more even-handed than those put forth in the Boston papers last week: *Boston Herald* columnist Steve Buckley called Williams's belated foray into baseball "an embarrassment" and a "huge mistake." *Boston Globe* baseball writer Gordon Edes labeled it a "ridiculous publicity grab." Skepticism about his June 20 signing isn't completely unfounded. There's certainly nothing about the younger Williams's baseball skills that merits such a move, and the average age of his teammates is 19, a little younger than John Henry was when he had his only other brush with professional baseball, a couple of spring training workouts with the Blue Jays in 1989. Says Ben Cherrington, Boston's assistant director of player development, "Out of respect to Ted and what he meant to the Red Sox, our ownership decided to grant John Henry this opportunity."

So far, the Kid's kid has struggled. John Henry is 0 for 6 in two games, reaching base only when he was hit by a pitch in his final at bat against the Gulf Coast Reds last Thursday. He is paying for the services of an independent hitting coach, Steve Ferroli, as well as speaking by phone to his father, whose health has lately been improving after a series of strokes. "I'm lacking seasons of hitting, seasons of real at bats," says John Henry, who is single. "I'm taking this extremely seriously. My goal is to lead the Gulf Coast League in hitting."

His team seems ready to accept him. While he posed for a photographer before Saturday's game, several players teased him by counting off the number of clicks made by the camera shutter. Throughout the game Williams sat in the middle of the bench, chatting quietly with trainers and teammates and cheering the Sox to a 5–1 victory. "When John Henry arrived, we accepted him as we would any other player who's being evaluated," says John Sanders, Williams's manager. "We respect his desire to do this." —*Mark Beech*



**SON OF A GUN** John Henry gets tips from Ted (left), perhaps the game's best hitter.

# Q+A SAMUEL L. JACKSON

**An avid golfer (with a six handicap) and a rabid sports fan, Samuel L. Jackson will host "The ESPY Awards" on July 10.**

"Stay out of bunkers."

**SI:** *You were at the Tyson-Lewis fight, correct?*
**Jackson:** Yes, I was at the Tyson-Lewis beat-down.

**SI:** *As a Jedi Master, do you think Tyson has been overtaken by the Dark Side?*
**Jackson:** Not that night, he wasn't. He needed some Dark Side. At least then he would have fought back.

**SI:** *Two years ago you purchased Roseanne's Beverly Hills home. Did you make sure that Tom Arnold didn't come with the house before you bought it?*
**Jackson:** *[Laughs.]* Well, I don't think that was an issue at the time.

**SI:** *We read that you're a serious golfer. What are the three best courses you've played?*
**Jackson:** Shadow Creek [Las Vegas], The Royal Birkdale [England] and Rancho Murieta Country Club [Sacramento County].

**SI:** *Tiger Woods always wears red on Sunday. What do you wear when you want to shoot a good score?*
**Jackson:** I wear shorts.

**SI:** *You often golf with Sidney Poitier. Does it piss you off that there are still some country clubs that would not let you two play based on race?*
**Jackson:** Well, sure. But there are a lot of clubs in this country that would ignore that just because of our celebrity. I've actually played at clubs where I was the first black person to play.

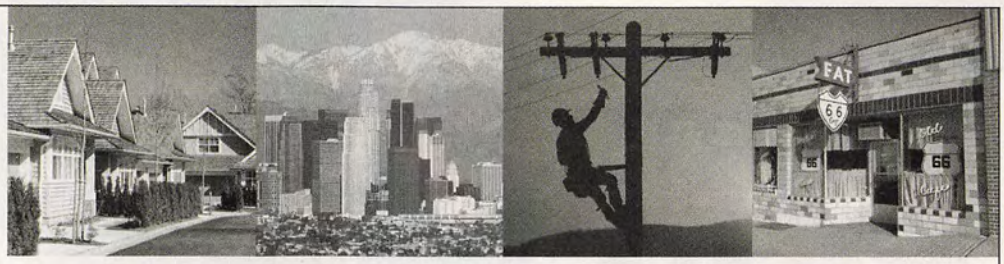
**SI:** *You've had a chance to golf with Tiger at some pro-ams. What's the best piece of golfing advice he has given you?*
**Jackson:** Stay out of the bunkers at St. Andrews.

**SI:** *What's the better bet: Your Star Wars character, Mace Windu, surviving the next film or Phil Mickelson finally winning a major?*
**Jackson:** Probably Phil Mickelson winning a major because I think I'm guaranteed to die in the next film.

**SI:** *Which celebrity superfan knows more about basketball, you or Spike Lee?*
**Jackson:** Spike knows more about New York hoops, but I know more about hoops in general.

**SI:** *Finally, did you waive your $8 million-per-movie fee to host the ESPYs?*
**Jackson:** Yes, I did. —*Richard Deitsch*

PRESTON MACK (JOHN HENRY); BETTMANN/CORBIS (TED); JONATHAN EXLEY/WIRE IMAGE




# Does 'I love you' mean more during peak hours?

For a long time, we've accepted that some words cost more than others because of the time of day they're said, or because of the distance they have to travel.

It's wrong. And now it's over.

Introducing The Neighborhood, a new nationwide local phone company. Finally, a place where all words are equal—whether you're speaking to someone next door or across the country. Where you get more freedom, without paying more for it. For $49.99 - $59.99 (the price varies by state) you get:

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- unlimited local
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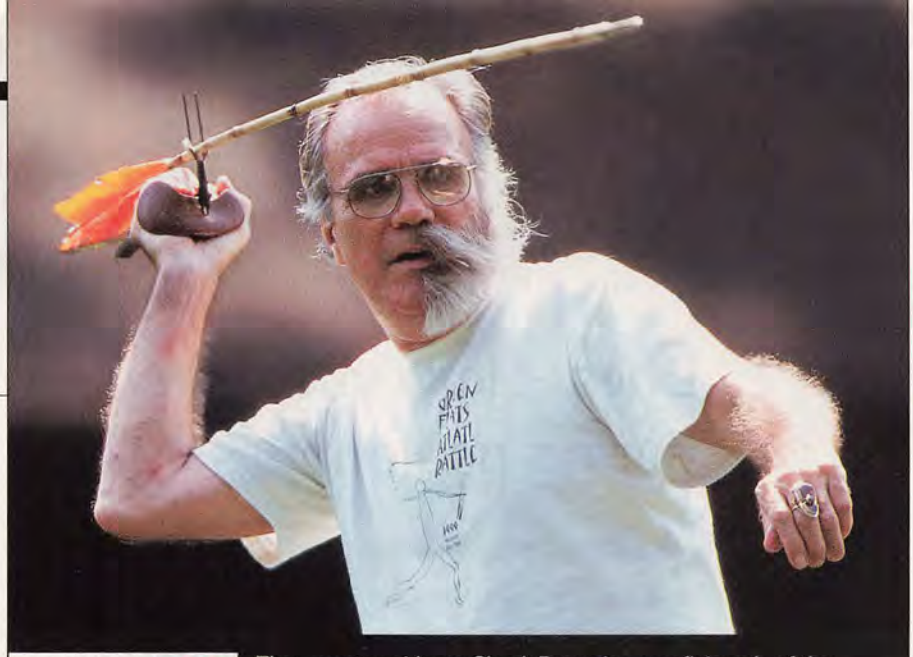
# SPORTS BEAT



**PICTURE THIS** There are two sides to Chuck Butorajac, an aficionado of the *atlatl*, an Aztec device used for throwing a lightweight spear. Butorajac, who has sported half a beard for seven years, competed in the International Standard Accuracy Competition and Meadowcroft Rockshelter Atlatl Contest in Avella, Pa. The former West Virginia and Pennsylvania champ finished fourth.

UNLIKE FELLOW blonde thespian **Cameron Diaz**, who played the owner of the fictional Miami Sharks in **Oliver Stone**'s *Any Given Sunday*, **Gwyneth Paltrow** hasn't done a pigskin flick yet, but don't think the 29-year-old Oscar winner isn't a fan of the game. Paltrow's father, **Bruce Paltrow**, creator of the 1970s basketball television show *The White Shadow*, reports that his daughter is a regular Gridiron Gwyneth. "She's a big Pittsburgh Steelers fan," he says. "I was a Steelers fan when she was a baby, and we used to watch the Steelers all the time. She's become a real proponent of defensive football." Perhaps, but back in '98 Paltrow predicted the offensive-minded Denver Broncos would upset the Green Bay Packers in Super Bowl XXXII. "I know Green Bay is favored," Gwyneth said then, "but I'm going to go with the Broncos." Denver, a two-touchdown underdog, ended up with a 31–24 win.

Pittsburgh for Paltrow

■ **David Beckham** may have left the World Cup stage, but Beckham-mania shows no signs of abating in Japan. Nearly a week after the English team flew home following its 2–1 quarterfinal loss to Brazil on June 22, the Westin Awaji Island Resort and Conference Centre on Awaji Island—the World Cup headquarters of Team England—was reporting 80 calls a day from fans hoping to stay in the room used by the Manchester United midfielder. The hotel has introduced a deal to make available a deluxe twin room on the 10th floor, where Team England occupied 28 rooms during the World Cup, for a reduced charge of 11,750 yen ($98). So far the hotel has refused to reveal the number of Beckham's room, but fans can sample his favorite dish (cucumber sushi roll) and have their feet massaged by the woman who worked on his talented tootsies.

■ The *Houston Chronicle* had to pull a photo of the Rockets' No. 1 draft pick, **Yao Ming**, from the front of its sports section on June 27 when a Chinese graphic artist on the paper's staff realized that a vintage poster visible behind Yao, photographed in Beijing, was emblazoned with anti-American slogans from China's Cultural Revolution. Editors replaced the picture, but not before it had been printed in 220,948 copies of the *Chronicle*'s 544,819 press run. The next day some 60 Chinese-speaking readers called or e-mailed the paper to provide precise translations of such slogans as Unite people of the whole world! Down with the American imperialists! **David Stern** & Co. will be relieved to know that the posters were not Yao's; the photo had been taken at CNN's Beijing studio, where the retro posters had been hung as a fashion statement, not a political one. "It was a good history lesson for all of us," says Dan Cunningham, the *Chronicle*'s assistant managing editor.

■ At a robust 6' 5" and 320 pounds, actor **Michael Clarke Duncan** would figure to be a force in the paint in a game of hoops. Indeed the gentle giant from *The Green Mile* attends most L.A. Sparks games and last Sunday spent a good three minutes telling ESPN2 sideline reporter **Vera Jones** how the Sparks should tweak their offense. ("They need to play the two-man game for **Lisa Leslie** and **Nikki Teasley**," he said.) Duncan's knowledge of the game impressed at least one hoops guru on hand. Said Connecticut coach **Geno Auriemma**, who served as a game analyst for ESPN2: "You know how good an actor he is? He just acted like a coach."

## THIS WEEK'S SIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Pete Rose has been elected to the Summit County (Ohio) Boxing Hall of Fame.

## THEY SAID IT A.C. GREEN

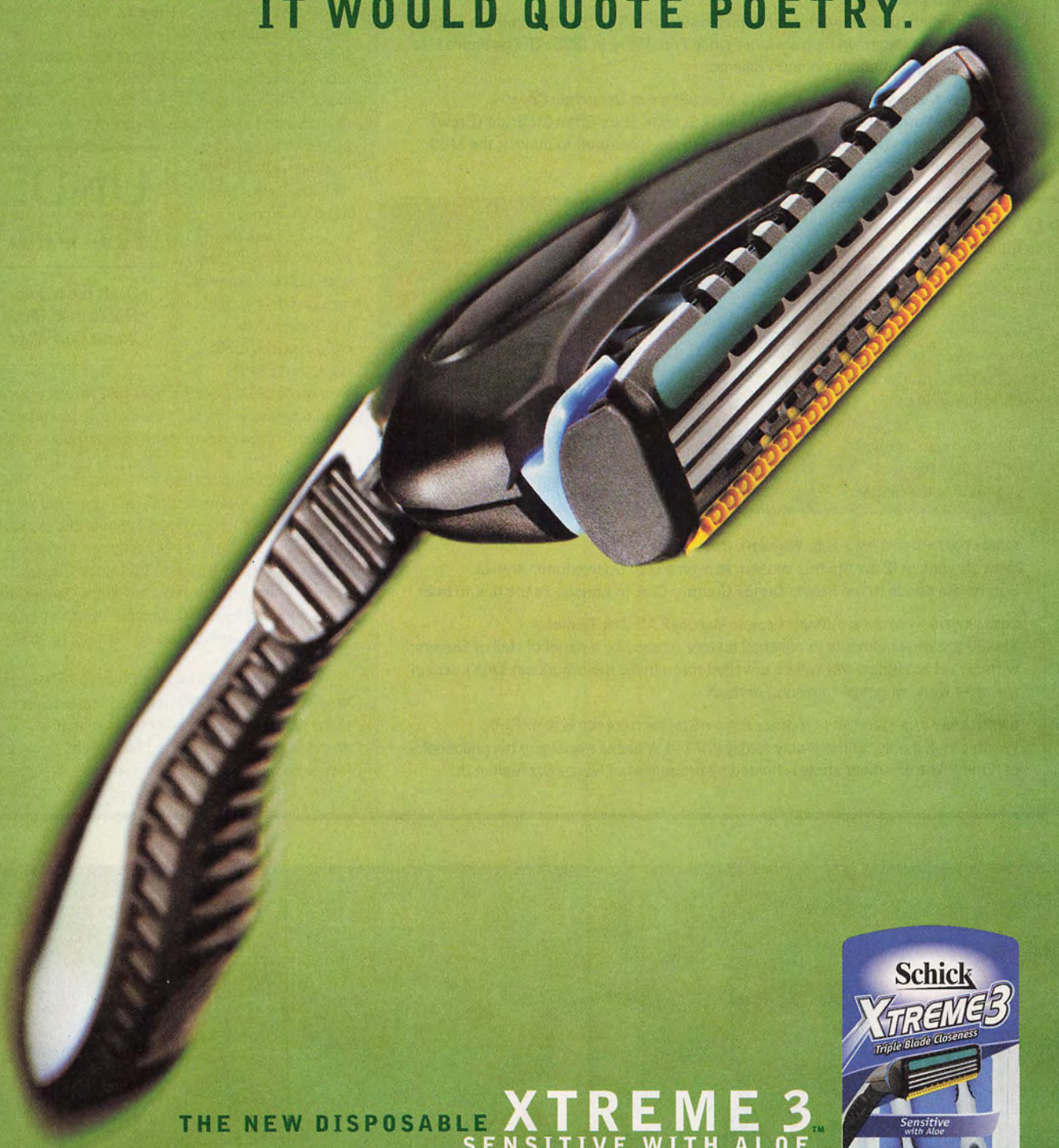
Thirty-eight-year-old former Lakers star known for his advocacy of premarital abstinence, on his honeymoon following his April wedding to former Houston Rockets Power Dancer Veronique Shipley: "It was worth the wait."

FRED VUICH (TOP); RUFUS F. FOLKKS/CORBIS (PALTROW); JOHN MABANGLO/AFP

IF IT WAS ANY MORE

# SENSITIVE

IT WOULD QUOTE POETRY.



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# THE WEEK IN TELEVISION

## JULY 5–JULY 11

**SATURDAY 7/6 AND SUNDAY 7/7** > NBC 9 AM > **Wimbledon Women's Final (Saturday), Men's Final (Sunday)**
If Tim Henman prevails on the gentlemen's side, it will be the first time the English have seen a homegrown men's winner since Fred Perry in 1936. The women's title will be won by somebody named Williams.

**SATURDAY 7/6** > ESPN2 4 PM > **N.Y./N.J. MetroStars at Columbus Crew**
This post–World Cup matchup between U.S. team stars Brian McBride (Crew) and Clint Mathis (MetroStars) was moved to the afternoon to make it the MLS game of the week.

## >> DON'T MISS

SATURDAY 7/6 > FOX 7 PM

**Pepsi 400**
Last July, Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s victory at Daytona, five months after his father died on the same track, inspired enough conspiracy theories for an *X-Files* reunion. This year Little E will go for two straight under the lights.

Dale Jr. (8) goes for another win.

**SUNDAY 7/7** > NBC 3 PM > **U.S. Women's Open Final Round**
With six wins in 12 events this season, two-time U.S. Open winner Annika Sorenstam heads to the Prairie Dunes Country Club in Kansas as the one to beat.

**TUESDAY 7/9** > FOX 8 PM > **Major League Baseball All-Star Game**
The 30 greatest moments in baseball history (picked by a panel of Hall of Famers, writers and broadcasters) will be unveiled throughout the broadcast. Don't expect the 1994 work stoppage to be one of them.

**WEDNESDAY 7/10** > HISTORY CHANNEL 8 PM > **Stories from the Hall of Fame**
Worth a look if only for the grainy footage of Ted Williams explaining his philosophy of hitting. The one-hour show is hosted by future Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr.

## UNDER REVIEW

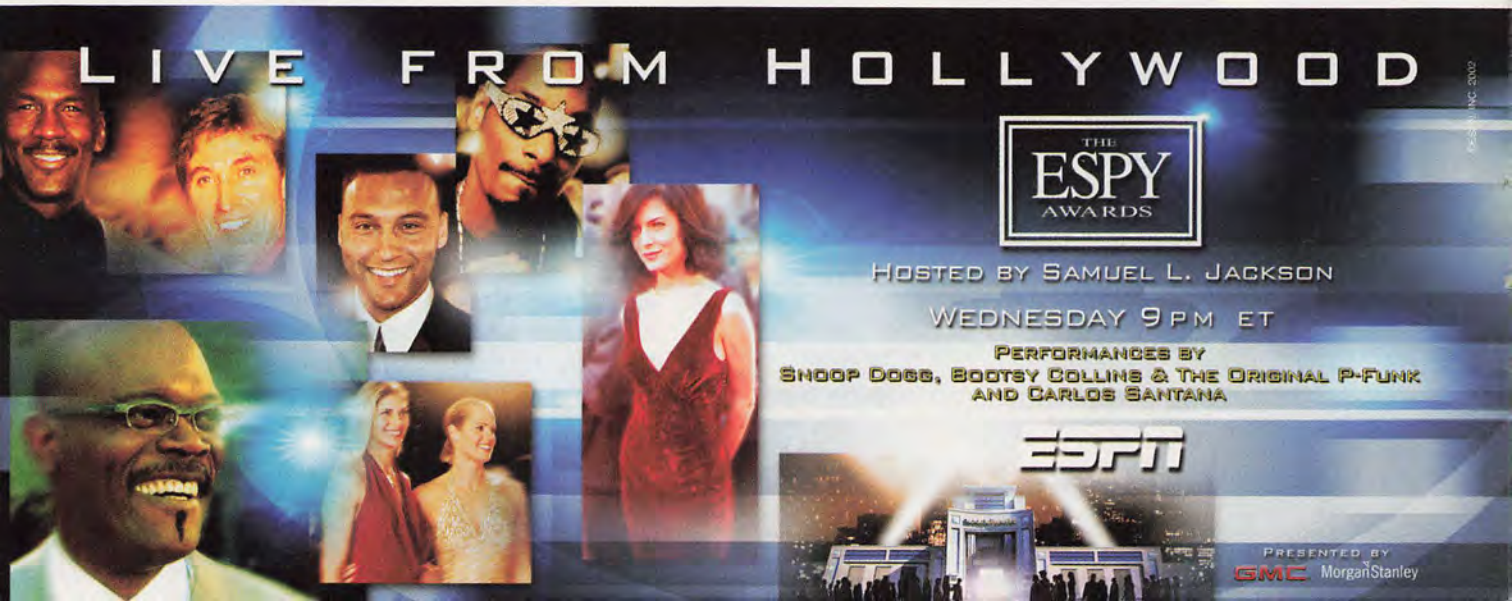
- Draft the Mikes
- NBC's Irish Blues
- World Cup Woes

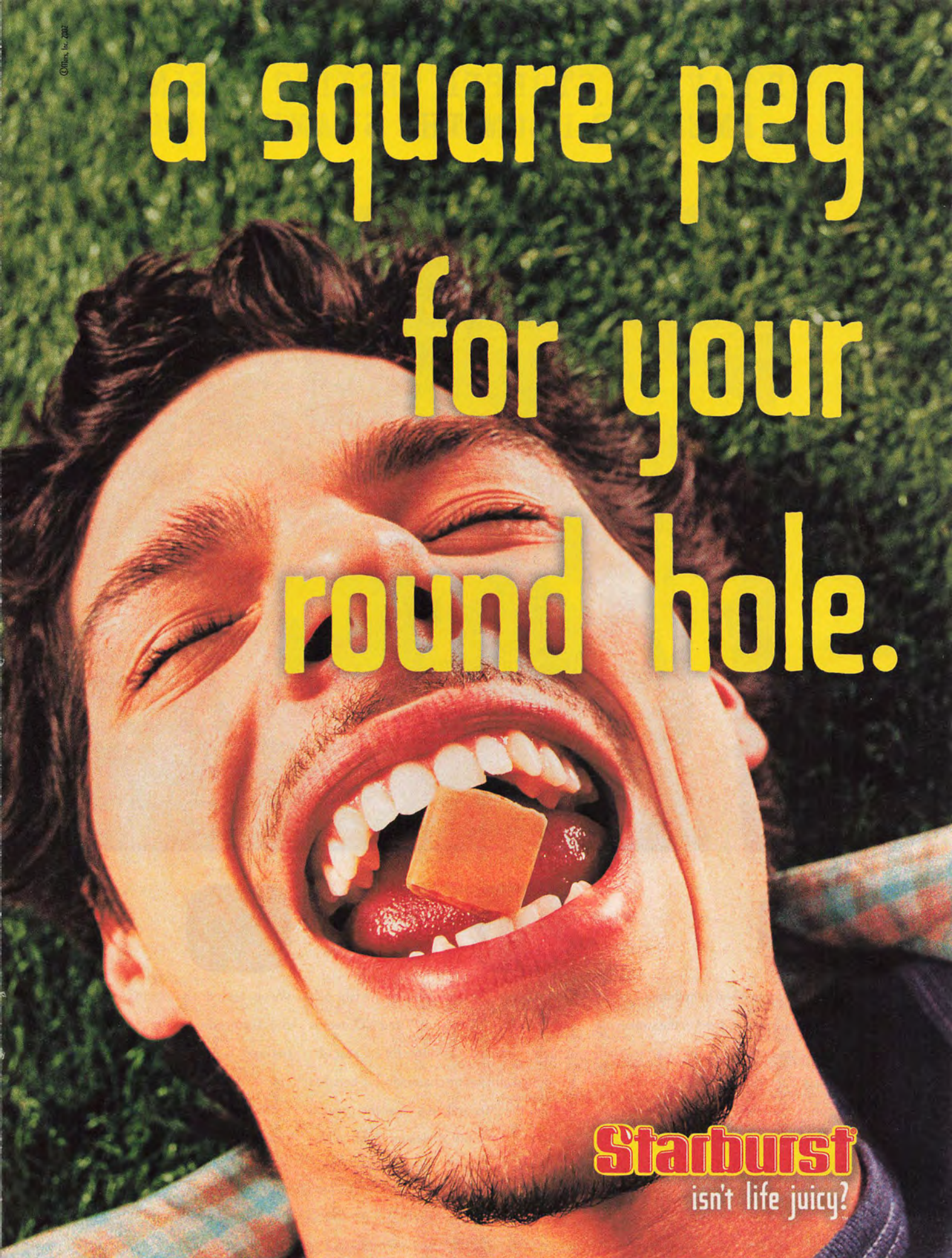
►While sports drafts can often make for tedious television, the byplay between combustible TNT analyst Charles Barkley (whose comments were broadcast throughout The Theater at Madison Square Garden) and a rabid New York City crowd gave the network's final NBA draft broadcast a heady anything-can-happen feel. Barkley and fellow analyst Kenny Smith also mixed it up sweetly with NBA commissioner David Stern; when the former players asserted that foreign draftees will face difficulties because of their limited English skills, Stern quipped, "When Kenny and Charles first came into the league, they didn't speak English either." If the candid comments of ESPN NFL draft guru Mel Kiper Jr. were broadcast live to a room of NFL officials and zealous draftniks, one can only imagine the bedlam that would ensue. Let's hope that ESPN, which will broadcast the NBA and NFL drafts next year, takes note of TNT's innovation and pipes its analysts' comments to the opinionated attendees.

►The luck of the Irish has not rubbed off on NBC. The network pays more than $6 million per year to air Notre Dame home football games and promotes the team as fervently as any other property. But the rights to the Aug. 31 Kickoff Classic at Giants Stadium—the most anticipated Notre Dame game in years because it marks the debut of coach Tyrone Willingham, against Maryland—belong to ABC.

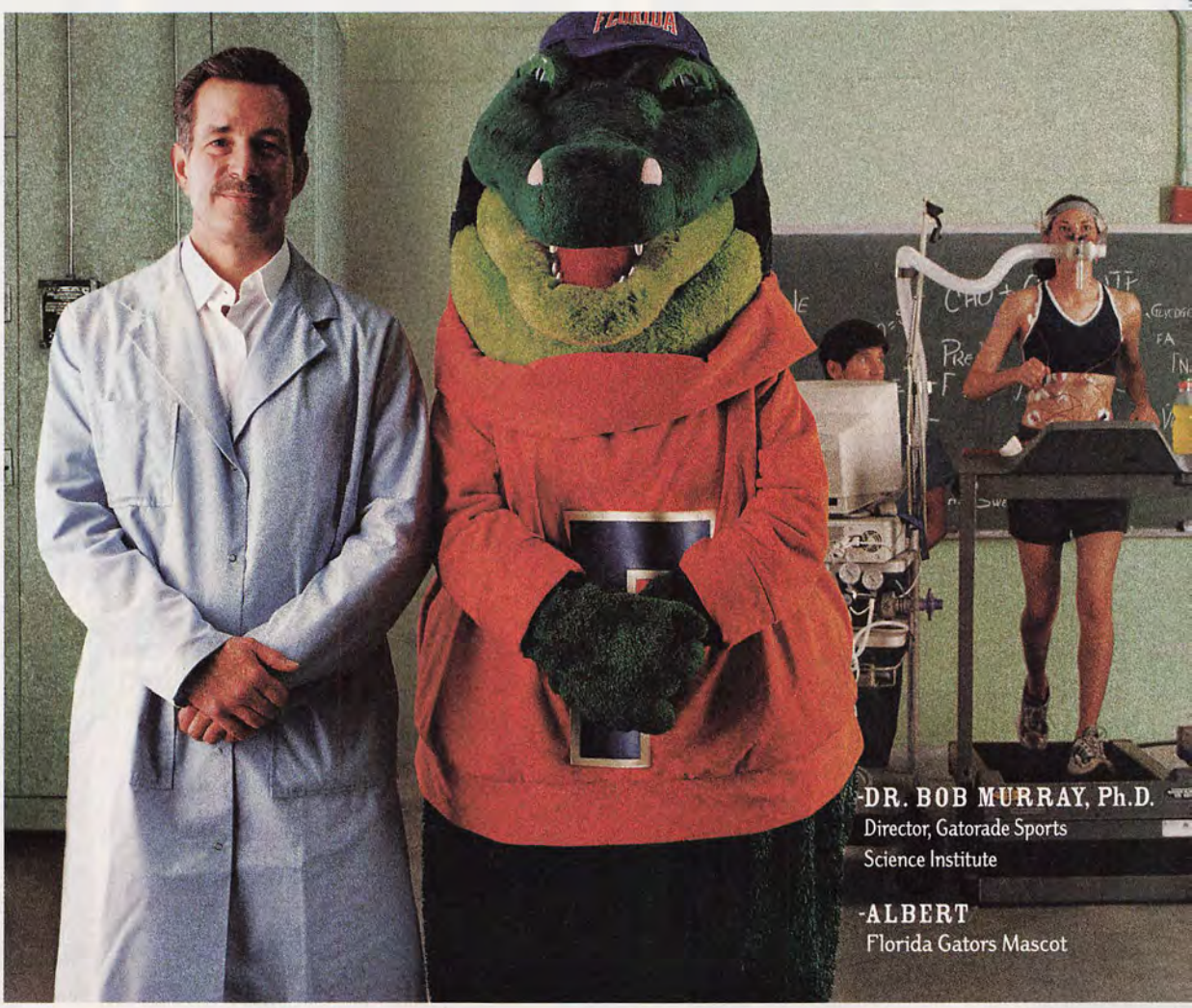
►Shame on ABC affiliates in Boston, Dallas, Detroit, New York City and Philadelphia for choosing not to show the network's midday rebroadcast of the World Cup final. Late-rising fans of the once-every-four-years event deserved better. —R.D.

BOB ROSATO




a square peg
for your
round hole.
Starburst
isn't life juicy?

# WE HAVEN'T STOPPED TESTING IT SINCE IT EMERGED FROM THE SWAMP IN 1965.



The first test came when dehydrated Florida Gators football players tired in the sweltering heat of the stadium called The Swamp. When university doctors created a carbohydrate-electrolyte beverage to keep the Gators properly hydrated, they became a fourth quarter team. Naturally, it was called Gatorade.

That was just the beginning. In the late '60s and early '70s, NBA, MLB,™ and NFL teams actually started asking for Gatorade. It hydrated athletes on championship benches through the '80s and '90s. And the proving continues, from youth sidelines through college to the World Series® and the Super Bowl.

We've tested thousands of athletes at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute, making Gatorade the most researched sports drink in the world. To make sure nothing hydrates athletes better, we haven't stopped testing it since the first Gators drank it in 1965. And we probably never will.

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For more of the story, www.gatorade.com

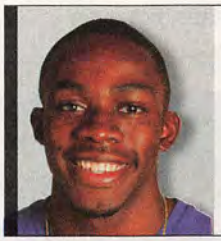


# Faces in the Crowd

**Ziggy Goryn,** WAYNE, N.J.
**Volleyball**
Ziggy, a senior at Wayne Hills High, set the state record for kills in a career (1,164) and was named first-team all-state for the second consecutive year. He also established school records in blocks (313), matches played (112) and matches won (83).

**Megan Racette,** DES MOINES
**Tennis**
Megan, a senior at Urbandale High, became the first woman since 1961 to win four state 2A singles titles. She dropped only two sets in her high school career while compiling a record of 76–0, and this year she led the Jayhawks to their first state team title.

**Zach Herbert,** CAPE ELIZABETH, MAINE
**Lacrosse**
Herbert, a senior attack, was named outstanding player of the Division III tournament after leading Middlebury (Vt.) College to its third consecutive championship. He scored four goals and had three assists in a 14–9 win over Gettysburg (Pa.) College in the final.



**Kelly Willie,** HOUSTON
**Track and Field**
Kelly, 19, swept the sprint events at the Adidas Outdoor Championships in Raleigh, winning the 100-meter (10.39) and 200-meter (20.83) races. Earlier this year Kelly ran the fifth-fastest indoor time ever (47.13) for a high schooler in the 400 meters.

**Rob Oppenheim,** ANDOVER, MASS.
**Golf**
Oppenheim, a senior at Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla., was named Division II male golfer of the year. He had the season's lowest stroke average (71.1) and birdied the final hole of the Division II championships to give Rollins its first title in 32 years.

**Jamie Wonderly,** HELENA, OHIO
**Softball**
Jamie, a junior righthander at Gibsonburg High, threw three no-hitters in state championship play as she led her team to its second consecutive Division 4 title. Jamie went 26–0 this year, and her 393 strikeouts were the third most in state history.

**Shirley Hintz,** COCOA, FLA.
**Bowling**
Hintz, 55, defeated Pam Buckner of Reno 215–198 in a one-game roll-off to win the Women's International Bowling Congress's Senior Queens Tournament in Milwaukee. Hintz averaged 197 for the five-day, 86-player tournament.

FROM TOP: JIM LUZZI; CHRISTOPHER MAHARRY; DAVID MACDONALD; F. CARTER SMITH; DEREK FOWLES PHOTOGRAPHY; OSBORNE'S PHOTOGRAPHY; PHELAN M. EBENHACK

Sports Illustrated

# Grand PLAN

## All signs point to Tiger's achieving what Arnie and Jack couldn't: victory in the third leg of the Grand Slam

BY MICHAEL BAMBERGER

THE FIRST thing you should know about the Grand Slam, modern golf division, is this: Nobody has ever won it. Not Ben Hogan, not Arnold Palmer, not Jack Nicklaus, not even Tiger Woods. Tiger's only halfway there now, but at better water-coolers everywhere people are talking like it's a done deal.

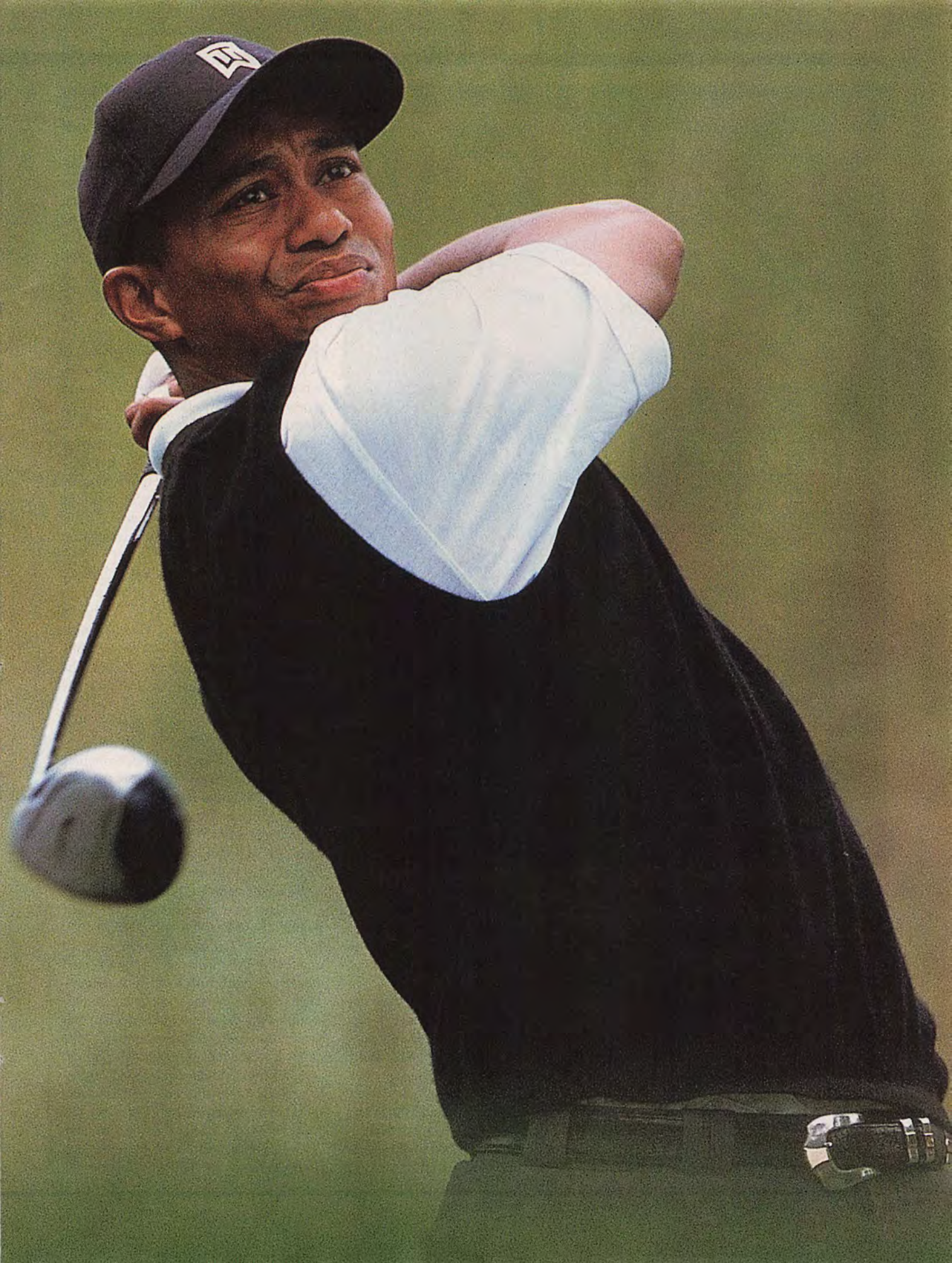
That's because when Woods took the first two steps toward the Grand Slam, at the Masters in April and the U.S. Open at soggy Bethpage last month, he made victory look easy, and no golfer has ever made winning look easy before, not since Bobby Jones, anyhow. In his press conferences Woods spouts the company line. He talks about the difficulty of the course, the competition, the sport they play. He's pretending to be a golf traditionalist. His record shows that what he is, in fact, is a golf radical.

Step 3 for Woods begins on July 18, at the British Open. The last guy to get this far was Nicklaus. In 1972 he won at Augusta and won the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. The British Open, which rotates among eight or so courses, was at Muirfield in

CHASING HISTORY Woods (right) knows all about the exploits of Nicklaus (above), who came up just short at the British in '72.

TONY TRIOLO (NICKLAUS)

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT BECK



# Tackling Muirfield

**With four par-4s measuring less than 400 yards and three eminently reachable par-5s, Muirfield could play right into Tiger Woods's hands. But he'll have to stay out of bunkers like the one guarding the 18th green (above).**

| HOLE | PAR | YDS. |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 448 |
| 2 | 4 | 351 |
| 3 | 4 | 378 |
| 4 | 3 | 213 |
| 5 | 5 | 560 |
| 6 | 4 | 468 |
| 7 | 3 | 185 |
| 8 | 4 | 443 |
| 9 | 5 | 508 |
| OUT | 36 | 3,554 |
| 10 | 4 | 475 |
| 11 | 4 | 389 |
| 12 | 4 | 381 |
| 13 | 3 | 191 |
| 14 | 4 | 448 |
| 15 | 4 | 415 |
| 16 | 3 | 186 |
| 17 | 5 | 546 |
| 18 | 4 | 449 |
| IN | 35 | 3,480 |
| TOTAL | 71 | 7,034 |

Scotland that year, just as it is this year.

Muirfield is a classic windblown links course, on the short side (at 7,034 yards), with fast, narrow fairways and rough that engulfs small caddies, to say nothing of balls. It is considered by Nicklaus and many other of the best players to be the fairest of the British links courses and therefore the one best-suited to American golfers, who don't expect silly things to happen to well-struck shots—and don't react well when they do.

In the weeks leading up to the '72 Open newspapers were filled with stories assessing Nicklaus's chances. The Sunday magazine of *The New York Times* ran a long feature written by Alistair Cooke that included a picture of Nicklaus sitting in a golf cart above the caption, "Toward the impossible dream." That's how the whole thing was viewed "back in the day," to borrow a phrase Tiger uses.

At William Hill, the chain of British betting parlors, the odds on Woods's winning the British Open are 11 to 8. You put eight pounds down on Woods, and the house gets the rest of the field—Phil Mickelson, Sergio García, Ernie Els, Vijay Singh, defending champion David Duval and 150 others. If Woods wins, you get back a measly 19 pounds. The odds of Woods's winning the British Open *and* the PGA Championship in August at Hazeltine, outside Minneapolis, are 4 to 1, down from the 50-to-1 odds he was listed at before the Masters. If he wins both, it's the end of golf as we know it.

"What everyone thought was impossible, Tiger wants to prove is possible," says Nick Faldo, who won the British Open at Muirfield a decade ago. "He's ticked off he didn't get proper credit for winning the Grand Slam when he did."

In Woods's mind—and Faldo's—he has already won the Grand Slam. He won the U.S. Open in June 2000 at Pebble Beach, won the British Open a month later at St. Andrews, won the PGA Championship at Valhalla that August, then won the Masters the following April, in a new year and a new season. It was the most dominating stretch of golf ever played, but many observers couldn't bring themselves to drape the Grand Slam sash on Woods. They (we) cited a technicality, that the four wins have to be in the same calendar year, as if this stuff were codified somewhere. "Call it what you want, I had the four trophies on my mantel," Tiger says.

Woods was given an itty-bitty title all his own: the Tiger Slam. Evidently that phrase didn't satisfy him much, which is why we are where we are this year. The man, now 26, is ready. If you're not, you've got a little time to get your head out of the sand. The Internet is not a fad, and Tiger will win the Grand Slam. This year.

Woods has eight major titles. He's 10 behind Nicklaus, still the leader in the clubhouse, but only for a while. Faldo predicts that Woods will win at least 12 of the next 20 majors. Throughout his career Nicklaus has been the most gracious runner-up you could imagine. (He had plenty of practice, finishing second in a major 19 times.) He might be back in that role sooner than he could have possibly expected.

Nicklaus grew up on the legend of Jones, winner of a different Grand Slam. In 1930 Jones—courtly Atlanta lawyer, iron-willed amateur golfer—won the U.S. and British Opens and the British and U.S. Amateurs. They were the four most important tournaments of the day, a day when amateur golf was more closely followed than the pro game. The Masters didn't exist. That invitational tournament, for leading professionals and top amateurs, debuted in '34 and quickly became a high-status event for one reason above all others: Jones was its host.

Twenty-three years after Jones's sweep there was no consensus on what consti-

GIACOMO MARCHESI (MAP); FRED VUICH/GOLF MAGAZINE

tuted the Grand Slam. The PGA Championship and the British Open overlapped, both played in early July. In 1953 Hogan, the crusty Texan, won Jones's event at Augusta, then won the U.S. Open at Oakmont. Hogan chose to play in the British Open, his first and only appearance in it. He won, at Carnoustie, and upon his return to the States he rode up Broadway in a convertible through streams of ticker tape. It was an achievement, winning the two big Opens and that young April tournament, the Masters, to boot.

Seven years later Arnold Palmer, at the height of his powers, won the Masters and then the U.S. Open, at Cherry Hills, outdueling Nicklaus and Hogan. A few weeks later he was flying across the Atlantic, first to play in a team event in Ireland, then to compete in the British Open at St. Andrews. On the flight over he was sitting with one of his buddies, the late Bob Drum, a Pittsburgh newspaperman. "I said to Drum, 'No one is ever going to win the two Opens and the two Amateurs in the same year again. The pro game is too big. They ought to have a new Grand Slam: the Masters, the U.S. Open, the British Open and the PGA Championship.' Drum was an enterprising man, and he ran with it." Palmer finished second at the British Open that year, a stroke behind Kel Nagle.

That leaves us with the two most recent players to have won the Masters and the U.S. Open in the same year: Nicklaus in 1972 and Woods in 2002. Nicklaus began the British Open at Muirfield with a single purpose, a sore neck and long odds—50 to 1, by his own overly modest estimation, though the bookies had him as the 2-to-1 favorite. "I was consumed with the idea of winning the Grand Slam," Nicklaus says. "I had won all the majors, a couple of times each by that time, and that was the only thing I had not accomplished in my career. I couldn't help but be consumed with it."

Since Nicklaus was consumed with it, and Nicklaus's career is Woods's road map, you can imagine what Woods is feeling right about now. Woods is expected to play this week at the Western Open, near Chicago. You can't engage him in an extended discussion about the Grand Slam or even Muirfield. He is world class at responding to questions politely and emptily. But watch him at work at the Western, particularly if there's a big wind blowing, giving the players a preview of Muirfield's winds. He'll be the only guy truly loving it. He'll be playing the Western but looking ahead, honing his game for the British.

At Muirfield, Nicklaus opened with rounds of 70, 72 and 71. He'd won the Masters and the U.S. Open with MacGregor clubs, but at Muirfield he was using Slazengers, the clubs he was contracted to use outside of the United States. He played the course conservatively, often hitting an iron off the tee, just as he had done when he won his first British Open, also at Muirfield, in 1966. With his neck hurting—a bad night's sleep did him in—he couldn't make the swings he wanted. After three rounds he trailed the leader, Lee Trevino, by six. When he woke up on the morning of the last round, the pain in his neck was suddenly gone. (He's been traveling with his own pillow ever since.) Over breakfast he told his wife, Barbara, that he would win the British Open. Such confidence!

In the last round Nicklaus finally let it rip with the most lethal club in his bag, the driver, and made a barrage of birdies. Woods, a superb student of golf history, no doubt knows what Nicklaus did at Muirfield. With the fairways firm and fast, Woods can hit his two-iron off the tee as long as and straighter than other players hit their three-woods. Come Sunday, in the unlikely event that he needs to make up ground, he can remove the tiger headcover from his big stick and go really, really low.

In '72 Nicklaus closed with a 66 that left him a shot behind the Merry Mex. Nicklaus shook Trevino's hand as he came off the final green, told him he was a great and deserving winner and said, "But why don't you go back to Mexico?" Nicklaus loved competing against Trevino, a friend, but his loss to him at Muirfield, he says, ranks among the most disappointing moments of his career. The two golfers never talked in detail about the '72 British Open until a couple of weeks ago. Trevino told Nicklaus the gory details of how he had hacked up the 71st hole, chipping in for par nonchalantly when he figured he was out of it.

**"What everyone thought was impossible, Tiger wants to prove is possible," says Faldo. "He's ticked off he didn't get proper credit for winning the Grand Slam."**

MAJOR FEATS New York threw a parade for Hogan in '53, seven years before Palmer made a run at the Slam.

Before the tournament Palmer thought Nicklaus had a good chance at Muirfield because "everything was going for him," but in those days Arnie was still betting on himself. At the U.S. Open this year, in a bet with his girlfriend for stakes he would not reveal, Palmer took Woods against the field. He'll do the same at Muirfield.

"Tiger's focus is different from the other guys'," Palmer says. To a generation now gray-haired or bald or getting there, Arnie is still the King, but Woods has already passed him in majors won. "The other guys are trying to win a tournament," Palmer says. "Tiger has major goals in mind, big-time stuff, history." □

JERRY COOKE (PALMER); BETTMANN/CORBIS

# SEIZE the Day

## A reborn **Ronaldo** awoke from his four-year nightmare and led Brazil to its fifth World Cup title with a performance for the ages

BY GRANT WAHL

ON SUNDAY, in the soaking rain of Yokohama, Japan, the oldest 25-year-old in the world was able to smile again. For four years Ronaldo Luiz Nazário de Lima had been the embodiment, physically and mentally, of a train wreck—a *bullet* train wreck. His nerves jangled, his knees mangled, the Brazilian striker was a cautionary tale, a transcendent talent lost to the Fates. Yet as his two goals led Brazil to a 2–0 win over Germany and an unprecedented fifth World Cup title, Ronaldo rediscovered his enchanting mix of youthful wonder and regal majesty. Suddenly his nutty coiffure, a tiara of hair on an otherwise shaved dome, looked less like a relic of the *Star Wars* bar and more like a crown for the once and future king.

The Brazil mystique is back. Or, as Ronaldo happily put it a few days before his 11th and 12th career World Cup goals, tying him with Pelé for the most by a Brazilian: "The nightmare is over."

It had originated in Paris, in the hours before Brazil's World Cup '98 final against France. After an ordinary pregame lunch, Ronaldo returned to his room and went into convulsions. "It was a really strong and shocking scene," his teammate Edmundo later testified in an investigation by the Brazilian national congress. Ronaldo, he said, "was lying down and hitting himself with his hands, with his teeth locked together and his mouth foaming." Though an exact cause was never established, Ronaldo, then 21, appeared to have suffered some sort of attack—a "brainstorm," as the European media called it. He played like a zombie that night, and

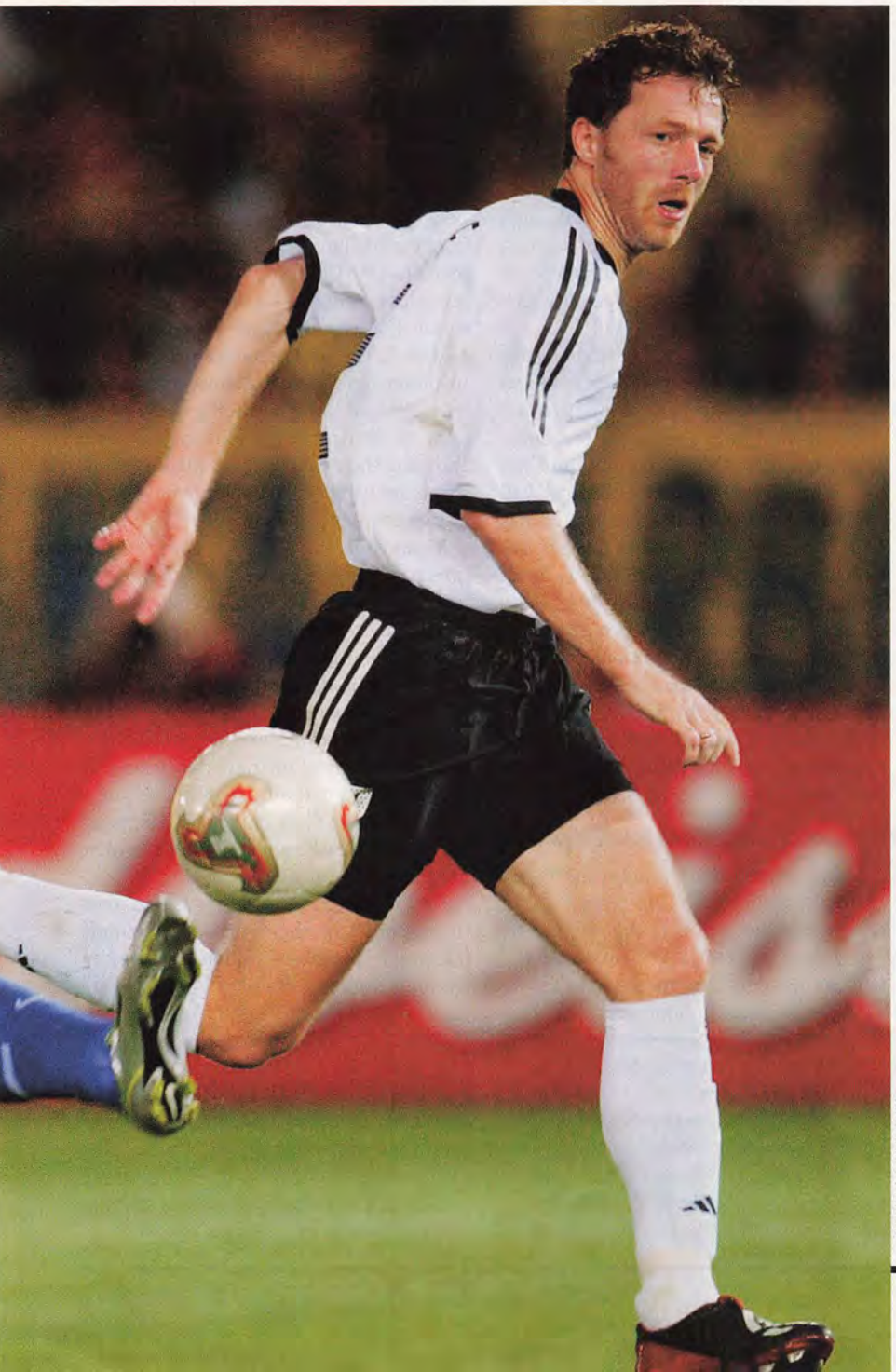
**9 LIVES** Flashing the brilliance that had twice made him world player of the year, Ronaldo left German defenders agape.

Brazil lost 3–0, its worst defeat in 87 World Cup games dating to 1930.

Thus began a three-year cycle of pain for Brazil and Ronaldo, the world player of the year in 1996 and '97. While playing for his club team, Internazionale of Milan, in '99, he tore a tendon in his right knee. Five months later, after rushing through rehab, he ruptured the ACL in the same knee during his first game back. All told, between Nov. 21, 1999, and Sept. 20, 2001, Ronaldo played just seven *minutes* of competitive soccer. In his absence Brazil struggled as it never had before, losing six World Cup qualifiers and coming perilously close to missing the tournament for the first time. Under Luiz Felipe (Big Phil) Scolari, their third coach in three years, the Brazilians arrived in Asia as the oddsmakers' fifth choice to raise the Cup, despite the presence of their fit (albeit rusty) star.

Still, the mystique had never disappeared completely. Not long after their 2–1 quarterfinal win over England, the Brazilian players were celebrating in the locker room when, according to one team insider, somebody knocked on the door. It was David Beckham, holding an England jersey. "Hi, sorry," Beckham said. "I just wanted to know if Ronaldo wanted to swap shirts with me." Over in the corner, defender Roberto Carlos furrowed his brow. "Beckham?" he asked. "Are you sure? I already traded shirts with him."

"You must be mistaken," Ronaldo told his teammate after returning with Beckham's jersey. "Beckham just gave me his." Shaking his head, Roberto Carlos opened his equipment bag and fished out an England top. As it turned out, Beckham—easily the most popular player in Europe—had traded his game-worn shirt with Roberto Carlos, then retrieved another shirt to exchange with Ronaldo. *David Beckham, just another Brazil memorabilia hound.*



JERRY LAMPEN/REUTERS

Yet while the Brazilians had avoided the upsets that claimed favorites Argentina and France, and while Ronaldo had scored a tournament-high six goals through the semifinals, even Pelé confessed to lingering doubts about the Phenomenon's mental fitness. Last Friday, when confronted by a horde of 200 jostling, cursing, sweat-marinated reporters at Yokohama's Mitsuzawa Park, Ronaldo was asked time and again if his "brainstorm" would recur. "Everyone keeps reminding me, and I don't know why," he said, the smile wiped from his face. "I am trying to be calm, to find tranquillity. I am not even thinking of '98." Instead, he said, he was spending hour after hour at the team hotel playing video games—the same video games that warn that excessive use can cause . . . seizures.

That wasn't the only suggestion that Brazil was perhaps laying a trap for itself. "We have to win," said right back Cafú, the captain, who was playing in his record third straight World Cup final. "If we don't, it's going to be a disaster even bigger than 1998." As if to heap more pressure on his players' shoulders, Scolari kept reminding them that for Brazil, finishing second "is like finishing last." Before every game the coach showed the team a videotape of Brazilian fans celebrating after triumphs and despairing after defeats. "There is nothing better to encourage you," the goalkeeper Marcos explained, "than to see Brazilians suffering with you."

Though scientists breathlessly announced last week that soccer-playing robots will be able to beat the world's best team by 2050, let the record show that the Germans nearly made it happen in 2002. After all,

DAMIEN MEYER/AFP

the *Mannschaft* had plowed through its half of the draw with mistake-free efficiency, if not the slightest bit of attacking flair. Only the dominance of Oliver Kahn, the impossibly Teutonic goalkeeper, had saved the Germans from elimination in their 1–0 quarterfinal win over a more deserving U.S. team. Afterward, Franz Beckenbauer, the grumpy German legend, muttered, "Kahn apart, you could take all of them, put them in a bag and hit them with a stick. Whoever got hit would deserve it."

Kahn nearly pulled off another shocker on Sunday. Three times in the first half Ronaldo slipped free to face him one-on-one. Three times Ronaldo failed to score. Brazil's Kleberson beat Kahn with a magnificent drive, only to watch it slam off the crossbar. Shortly after halftime German striker Oliver Neuville hit the Brazilian woodwork himself, and by midway through the second half the two teams seemed headed for a draw that would have to be resolved by the much-hated penalty kick shootout.

GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP

**PAIN AND JOY** While Kahn pondered his one World Cup error, Pelé embraced the man who matched his Brazil scoring mark.

Then Ronaldo struck. Viewed closely, the sequence was a compendium of the attributes that make him so dangerous: speed, tenacity and a sense for the game. After a harmless throw-in in the Brazilian half, Ronaldo received a long diagonal ball on the left side. Normally defender Thomas Linke would have stepped in to clear, but he backed off, fearing Ronaldo's speed. Though Ronaldo fell and lost the ball, he bounded up immediately (another rare trait) and picked the pocket of Germany's Dietmar Hamann. In one killer move Ronaldo spun away from Christoph Metzelder, flicked the ball to his teammate Rivaldo and sprinted goalward for the return pass. None came—this was Rivaldo, a man not known for sharing—but Rivaldo's shot knuckled downward off Kahn's palms, then caromed off his chest, and in a flash Ronaldo pounded the loose ball into the net.

He would strike again 12 minutes later (after a brilliant step-over by Rivaldo froze the German defense), but the game had been won in those frantic moments when Ronaldo's explosiveness reigned and Kahn's steel finally failed him. "This is the only mistake I made in the seven matches of the World Cup," the disconsolate keeper said afterward, "and that one mistake was brutally punished."

When title No. 5 was finally sealed on Sunday night, Ronaldo and his Brazilian teammates pranced around Yokohama's International Stadium in overcoat-sized national flags, as canons belched confetti. Thousands of tiny origami birds, a rainbow-hued paper aviary, fluttered down from the stadium roof. To accept the champion's trophy, Cafú climbed atop its teetering glass pedestal—a delightfully unscripted move—and held the 11 pounds of gold aloft. The celebration was capped by a 10-player Brazilian conga line, led by midfielder Ronaldinho pounding out a *batucada* on his drum. The players sambaed and sang their way through the interview room, surely the most festive *no comment* of this or any World Cup.

Meanwhile, Ronaldo held court for the international media, another sign of his hard-won maturity. During his long ordeal away from the game, he married Milene Dominguez, a fellow *futebol* player who holds the Brazilian soccer-ball-juggling record of 55,187 consecutive touches. One shudders to imagine the genetic potential of their two-year-old son, Ronald, or their second child, due in October. At their current strike rate, they'll someday be able to field their own 11-member team.

For his part, Ronaldo can't seem to wait. In response to the typically Brazilian postgame question—Which is more rewarding, winning the World Cup or ending the 40 days of chastity imposed by Scolari?—Ronaldo didn't take long to engage in the debate. "Both are very hard to stay without," he said. "Sex I am going to do in a few moments, but nothing can be so rewarding as the World Cup." Pause. "Not that sex is not good."

With that he leaned back, closed his eyes and giggled like the teenager of old. □

## Up Next: 2006

WHILE BRAZIL met Germany for the first time in World Cup history on Sunday, the U.S. can only hope it doesn't run into the Germans for the third straight World Cup in 2006. Germany will be hosting the event, an honor that inspires great things from the home team. (Witness South Korea and, to a lesser extent, Japan this year.) The tournament is tentatively scheduled for June 9 to July 9 in 12 cities, with Berlin set for the final. While Germany will get an automatic bid as the host, for the first time the reigning champion won't receive a free pass to the next World Cup. For Brazil, which struggled mightily during South America's tortuous 18-game qualifying campaign for 2002, that's not welcome news.

The North American audience will certainly find the next Cup easier to follow, with live TV broadcasts during daylight hours. (Again ABC and ESPN will air the games.) Just two years until qualifying starts. The countdown begins now.—G.W.

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**PRIVATE SHOWING** Paxson and Bratz went to a gym in L.A. to scout Butler in May.

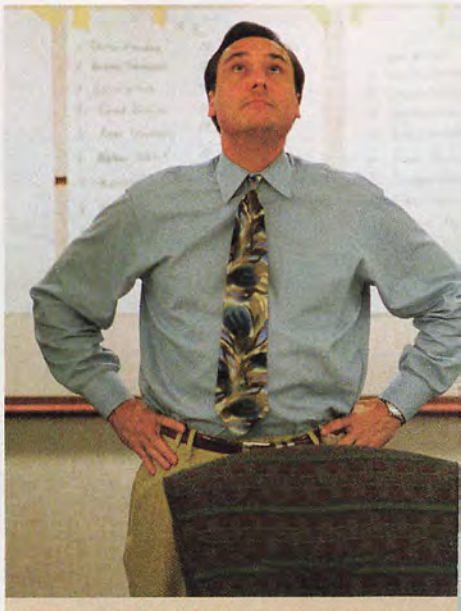
**CATTLE CALL** Cleveland's brain trust saw

# Double DEALING

The Cavaliers needed to make a big, daring move on draft day, and G.M. **Jim Paxson** had the perfect plan. Well, almost perfect

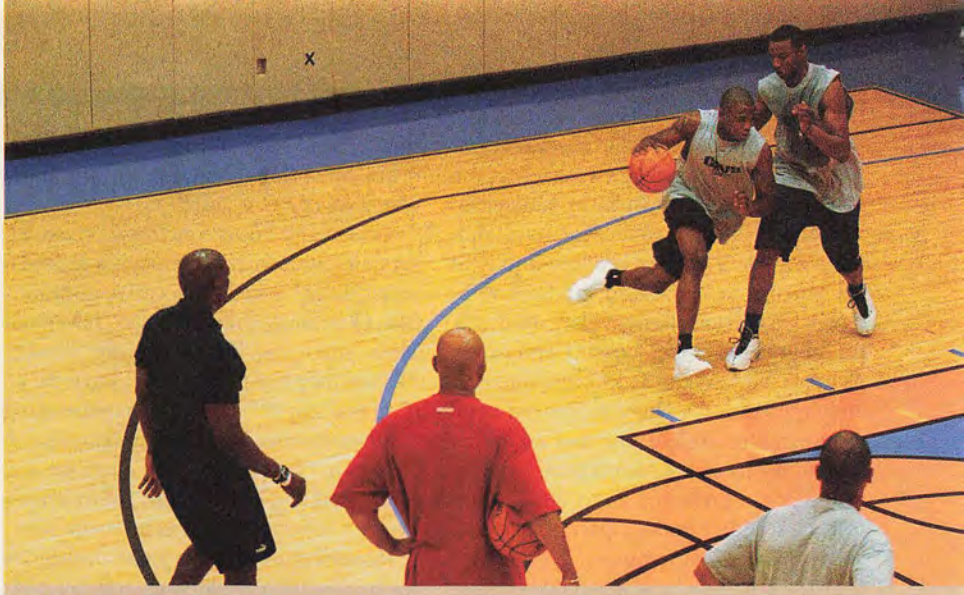
BY IAN THOMSEN

**DRESS REHEARSAL** The Cavs' staff gathered the night before to rank the top 50 prospects.



**THE PROPOSAL** After picking Wagner,

all its prospects at the NBA predraft workout.



**SHOWDOWN** The Cavs' top prospects, Wagner (left) and Butler, faced off in Cleveland.

YOUR BEST player is Zydrunas Ilgauskas, a 7' 3" giant with Bill Walton's feet. He's possibly the world's nicest guy, but his size 16s have been put back together five times by surgeons who have inserted seven pins. You still owe him $40.5 million over the next three years, which means 25% of your payroll is devoted to a player who has missed 60% of his games over his six-year career.

Your second-best player, Andre Miller, is entering his fourth year, has never made an All-Star team, never made the playoffs, never had a winning season and says he deserves a maximum salary of $10.6 million.

You've spent three years trying to rebuild the team, dumping horrid contracts like Shawn Kemp's seven-year, $107 million deal, but it's like trying to restructure one of the airlines. Attendance is plunging, and the team is reportedly for sale. The fans want hope, excitement, energy; they don't care about the finances. They want a daring move. They want you to snap your fingers and make all the problems go away.

Your name is Jim Paxson. You are the 44-year-old general manager of the Cleveland Cavaliers, and you have a plan. If all goes well, you will hatch it on June 26, the night of the NBA draft.

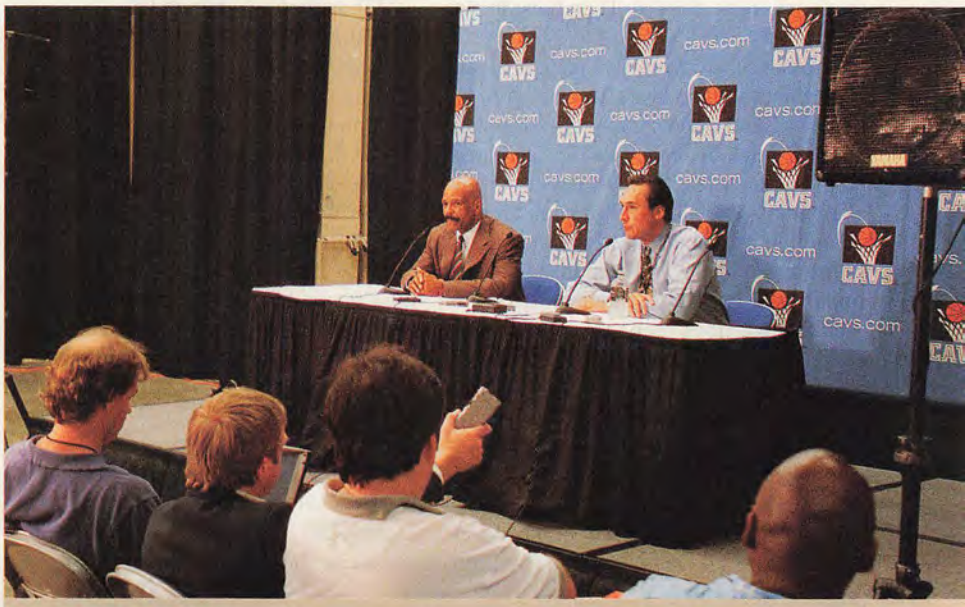
### JUNE 13: 13 DAYS BEFORE THE DRAFT

Paxson was prowling the practice court at Gund Arena in Cleveland alongside his coaches and Mike Bratz, the Cavs' player personnel director. The Cavs had the No. 6 pick in the June 26 draft—their best position since 1986—and they were awaiting the arrival of four of the highest-rated players in the draft: swingman Caron Butler of Connecticut, guard DaJuan Wagner of Memphis, small forward Qyntel Woods of Northeast Mississippi Community College and power forward Marcus Haislip of Tennessee.

The workout began at 12:10 p.m. The first alarm was sounded at 12:11. All four players were having difficulties with a simple crossover dribble drill. "Your footwork is bad, guys," shouted assistant coach Jerry Eaves. "That's why you're having trouble." As Woods drove to the basket, head coach John Lucas scolded him like a grade school gym teacher: "You went off the wrong foot!"

TOP ROW FROM LEFT: TODD BIGELOW; JONATHAN DANIEL; CHUCK SOLOMON
BOTTOM ROW FROM LEFT: DAVID LIAM KYLE; BILL FRAKES (2)

Paxson (left) hoped as Gund talked trade with L.A.




**POSTMORTEM** Lucas (left) and Paxson explained their moves to the Cleveland press.

If NBA fans could attend these predraft workouts, they would be amazed at the scarcity of fundamental play by young men who will be handed rookie wages of $1 million or more. The Cavs brought a total of six players to Cleveland, and all were flawed. Maybyner (Nene) Hilario of Brazil, the 19-year-old power forward who would be taken No. 7 by the Knicks and immediately traded to the Nuggets, proved to be a tremendous athlete who had no moves around the basket. Forward Jared Jefferies of Indiana, who would go to Washington at No. 11, didn't make a perimeter jump shot until the 41st minute of his workout for the Cavs. Woods, who would be taken by Portland with the 21st pick, played listlessly, apparently exhausted after arriving guard. "He knows how to be a pro, he can score, he's strong, and he's 6' 2" with the arm span of a 6' 9" guy."

Paxson and Lucas conducted private interviews with each player, using different styles. Lucas asked provocative questions like, How many children do you have? and How much marijuana do you smoke? "When they say they smoke, I ask them, 'Can you stop?' " said Lucas, a recovering substance abuser who runs a rehab clinic in Houston. "If they say they don't smoke, then a red flag goes up and I start asking people I know to find out more about them."

Paxson's approach was more low-key. He invited the 19-year-old Wagner into his office, sat down across a small round table from him and asked, "What do you think

- Re-sign Miller, or if he goes, get equal value in return. Paxson was working on that.
- Re-sign 22-year-old small forward Ricky Davis, a restricted free agent who had shown signs of becoming a star last season. The fans didn't know it, but Paxson had already made room on his payroll to keep Davis by agreeing to trade 31-year-old Wesley Person, who had two years and $14.7 million remaining on his contract, for a second-round draft choice and Nick Anderson, who had one year left at $6.1 million.
- Sign some decent free agents. Paxson and Lucas had recently met for four hours with team owner Gordon Gund, examining the rosters of the other teams in the league, searching for valuable players who might become available by trade or as free agents.

**THE TOP PROSPECT**
Wagner was impressive in his workout and interview.

**THE SECOND CHOICE**
Butler was deemed most likely to help immediately.

**THE BAIT**
Miller seemed to be a perfect fit for the Clippers.

**THE QUESTION MARK**
Woods was crossed off the list after a lackluster workout.

at 12:30 a.m. following a workout in Denver. "It's a grind for these guys having to compete in all these workouts," Bratz said. "But if you're tired from a late flight, hey, that's what the NBA is. They have to get used to it."

The two most impressive players to audition for the Cavs were Wagner, a 6' 2" freshman, and Butler, a 22-year-old sophomore. Though he had landed in Cleveland on the same flight as Woods, Butler quickly elevated his level of play during an intense 77-minute workout. Paxson was hoping to find a player who could help his team as a rookie, and nobody in range of the No. 6 pick looked more prepared than Butler. Lucas liked Butler too, but the coach seemed even more impressed with Wagner's basketball IQ: When Lucas advised him on how to cover the pick-and-roll, Wagner adjusted on the next play. "His father [Milt Wagner] was a pro, so he's been playing with pros all his life," said Lucas, who believes Wagner could become a star NBA point you'll be able to come into the league and do right away?"

"Whatever the coach tells me to do," Wagner said uncomfortably.

"What about a girlfriend?"

"Nah," whispered Wagner.

"Basketball's your girlfriend," Paxson said, smiling. "What about when you're in the NBA and you're making money and stuff, do you think that will change you at all?"

"No," said Wagner. "I just love the game."

After Wagner left, Paxson said, "This kid is 6' 1" [without shoes], and if you take a 6' 1" guy at Number 6, you'd better be right. But I'm not down on the kid. I like the kid. He loves to play, he plays all the time, and those kids get better. And"—he paused for dramatic effect—"he wants to come to Cleveland."

### JUNE 23: THREE DAYS TO GO

Here's what Cavs fans wanted Paxson to accomplish, to judge by what was being written in the Cleveland-area papers.

Such meetings are especially long in Cleveland, because Gund is blind and can't see tapes of prospects.

- Don't draft a stiff. The Cavs put together a database of 353 potential picks, all of whom had been scouted personally by the team's four scouts in the U.S. and Europe. In addition Paxson hired private investigators to check the backgrounds of players he thought he might take at No. 6. His goal was to be as thorough as possible, with the understanding that little happens as planned in the NBA. Losing has tortured Paxson. "We haven't done as well as I'd like since I've been in charge, and there are a lot of factors involved in that," said Paxson, who has two seasons remaining on his contract. "But ultimately I'm responsible, and at some point you've got to start showing some progress no matter what the circumstances are."

### JUNE 25: ONE DAY TO GO

While Paxson met with Gund, the four coaches met with Bratz, head scout Dar-

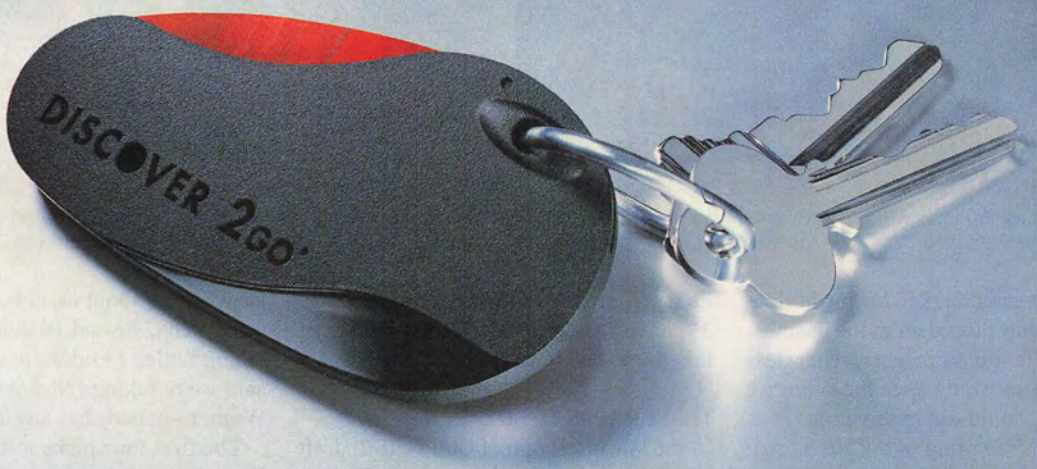
FROM LEFT: BOB ROSATO; MANNY MILLAN; BOB ROSATO; THOMAS WELLS/NE MISSISSIPPI DAILY JOURNAL

Consumer Research Results:

98% of people thought it was "Cool looking."

93% of people thought it was "Innovative."

4% of people thought it was "A cell phone."

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rell Hedric and scout Don Donoher in the team locker room at Gund Arena at 10 a.m. to begin rating the top players by position. They touted Wagner as the top shooting guard in the draft, Butler as the second-best small forward (behind Mike Dunleavy) and Chris Wilcox, the 6' 10" sophomore forward from Maryland, as the No. 2 power forward (behind Drew Gooden).

When Paxson entered the locker room at 1:40, he told his staff that the team was going to trade Person. He also let them know that the Los Angeles Clippers were interested in trading for Miller.

They discussed a few rumors—that Dunleavy was headed to Golden State as the No. 3 pick, that Denver might take Wagner at No. 5 and that Woods was sliding because of a question mark in his medical reports. Then they moved on to the business of ranking the top 50 players, regardless of position. This would form the definitive list that they would use in the draft.

They listed Yao Ming as the No. 1 prospect. Paxson then nominated Jay Williams of Duke as the No. 2 player on the board. "If Jay Williams slipped to six, would we take him over Wagner?" Paxson asked.

Lucas said, "No."

Paxson asked for all opinions. "If we have Andre, then I'd take Wagner," one said. Another agreed. Two others voted for Williams.

Assistant coach Ron Ekker changed the subject. "I'm a little concerned about this talk of trading Andre," he said. "That can't be a basketball decision."

Paxson explained that he, Gund and Lucas had agreed that they wouldn't trade Miller unless they received two promising young players. "There's a 90 to 95 percent chance that Andre's going to be on our roster on Thursday morning," Paxson said. "But if we have the chance, let's collect young players we like who are under contract.

"We're not going to trade Andre because he wants the max. We know Andre. We aren't winning with him. Nobody's coming to our building to see Andre Miller play. I'm not putting Andre down. It's just a fact. You say it's not a basketball decision, but in the future it is. We're only going to trade him if we can get two young players and Wagner and build for the long term."

"That's if we are part of the future," Ekker said. "You may put us in a position where we are not part of the future."

Instead of boiling over in frustration at this challenge, as many G.M.'s would have done, Paxson continued to reason with Ekker. "Gordon Gund doesn't want to win 35 games," Paxson said. "He's willing to go this route. You have to trust that."

### THREE HOURS TO GO

In the late afternoon of Gund's 18th draft as owner of the Cavs, he met with Paxson. They went over the scenarios again and again. If they could take Wagner at No. 6, they would try to make a deal with the Clippers. Gund would negotiate by phone with Donald Sterling, owner to owner, which is routine in big trades. The Clippers were the only club with enough high draft picks (Nos. 8 and 12) and young players to make a bid for Miller. None of the draft's top teams—No. 1 Houston, No. 2 Chicago, No. 4 Memphis, No. 5 Denver, not even No. 3 Golden State, which was desperate for a point guard—were interested in trading their picks for Miller, which Paxson took as further proof that Miller is not yet worthy of a max contract. "I hope like hell that if Andre's here, he has an unbelievable year and we win," Paxson said. "Because we will pay him what he's worth."

### ZERO HOUR

The war room was on the sixth floor of Gund Arena. Eighteen members of the organization sat around a long table, with Gund seated at the head. A live telecast of the draft was playing on a TV at the far end of the room; a speakerphone blared occasional messages from draft headquarters in New York City. Paxson and Bratz sat next to each other with a pair of phones between them, answering and making last-minute calls. Lucas, hopping with nervous energy, walked in and out of the room before plopping into a chair next to Gund. "I've put out so many lies about us, nobody knows what we're doing," he said, laughing. "I said we're taking Butler, I said we're taking Wilcox, I said we're taking [Nickoloz] Tskitishvili, Wagner—nobody has any idea."

The first four picks went as expected: Yao, Williams, Dunleavy, Gooden. Now it was Denver's turn. This was the one team the Cavs feared would take Wagner. "Come on Denver, do the right thing, do the right thing," Lucas said, pacing the room.

When Denver took Tskitishvili, a highly skilled 19-year-old from the Republic of Georgia, everyone in the room cheered except for Paxson, who immediately dialed Clippers VP of basketball operations Elgin Baylor to tell him that the Cavs would be taking Wagner. Paxson believed this would surprise the Clippers, who also coveted Wagner, and he wanted to give them as much time as possible to regroup and adjust their offer for Miller. Next Paxson called in the pick of Wagner, making it official. He then made a lap of the table, shak-

**THE TOP GUARD**
The Cavs liked Williams but were sure he'd go at No. 2.

**THE REBOUNDER**
Gooden was ranked the top power forward in the draft.

**THE SMALL FORWARD**
Dunleavy also figured to be gone before the Cavs picked.

**THE SWITCH**
The Cavs wanted Butler at No. 8, but L.A. took Wilcox.

FROM LEFT: BOB ROSATO; JOHN BIEVER; AL TIELEMANS; MANNY MILLAN

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ing hands to congratulate everyone. "I want to see you smiling," Paxson jibed at Ekker. "You like this guy."

At 8:01 p.m. Cleveland's pick was announced. At 8:04 the phone rang. Paxson held out the receiver to Gund. "It's Sterling."

The television was muted, and everyone in the room went silent. Paxson, who had been as calm as an insurance broker, jumped to his feet, hands in pockets, shoulders thrust back, face drawn tight. Gund settled into a chair with his red-tipped cane folded across his lap and declared calmly and pleasantly, as if he were on a Sunday morning stroll, "Hi, Donald, how are you?"

After a brief exchange of pleasantries Gund declared his gambit: "Darius Miles and Number 8 for Andre Miller."

Gund asked Sterling, "Would you do [Lamar] Odom, eight and 12?"

Gund listened for a moment, then put the phone to his chest and asked Paxson, "Odom and eight?"

"Yes," said Paxson.

"Yes," Gund told Sterling. Gund and Paxson thought they had their deal.

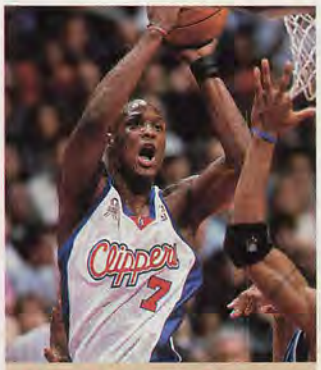
"He wants to know who we want [with the eighth pick]," Gund said to Paxson.

"Caron Butler," Paxson said.

Sterling said he'd have to put Gund on hold for a moment. The people in the Cavs war room began to celebrate—they were going to get their two favorite players in the draft as well as the 6' 9" Odom, a 22-year-old capable of averaging 20 points, eight rebounds and six assists. If Odom deal, that was clearly not true: There were still about 90 seconds on the clock, plenty of time to complete the trade. Did the Clippers stall and then pretend to botch the deal in order to back away, believing they could make a better trade later this summer? It's hard to imagine. They had continued to behave as if a mistake had been made and they wanted to rectify it. Barry Hecker, the Clippers' player personnel director, called Bratz to say they were trying to trade Wilcox to Phoenix for the No. 9 pick or to Miami for No. 10 so the Cavs could get Butler, but Paxson was sure that neither deal would go through. He told the Clippers the only way they could get Miller now was to hand over Miles and the 12th pick. But that wasn't going to happen.

**THE KEEPER**
Paxson cleared room on his payroll to re-sign Davis.

**THE OBJECT OF DESIRE**
The Cavs thought they had Miles, but Sterling balked.



**THE SUBSTITUTE**
When offered Odom instead of Miles, the Cavs said yes.

**THE NEW CAV**
Paxson's grand plan fell apart, but he did get Wagner.

This should have come as no surprise to Sterling. Paxson and the Clippers had been discussing the trade for three weeks, but Sterling now complained that Miles was too sensational to give up. "Well," answered Gund, "we know what Andre is, and he led the league in assists this year . . . and he's just the right player for your team."

In the middle of the conversation it was announced in New York that the Knicks had used the No. 7 pick to acquire Hilario, leaving Wilcox available. Within seconds Sterling told Gund that the Clippers wanted to keep their No. 8 pick to grab him.

Gund held the phone to his chest and leaned toward Paxson. "How would Miles and 12 do?"

"Yes," said Paxson.

"Don," said Gund, returning to the phone, "we'll take Miles and 12, and you take your guy at eight."

Sterling said no. He would not trade Miles. The Cavs now had less than four minutes left to salvage a deal.

didn't want to stay in Cleveland when his contract expired after next season, the Cavs could fetch something good for him in a sign-and-trade. In the meantime they would have a young, exciting team, and the Clippers would have a point guard capable of leading them to the playoffs. It made sense for everybody. So why had Sterling put Gund on hold?

"Two minutes," the speakerphone voice declared.

Within 30 seconds, Sterling came back on the line and said the trade was off, that they'd run out of time, that the Clippers had drafted Wilcox.

## ONE HOUR LATER

Paxson, Gund and Bratz stood in a corner of the room trying to piece together what had gone wrong with their deal. For one thing, they realized, Sterling apparently had not been in the war room with Baylor, which had made communication difficult.

When Sterling had come back on the line and told Gund that it was too late to do the

With the No. 10 pick, the Miami Heat selected Butler. "We're out," Paxson said.

## FOUR HOURS LATER

So close. Paxson and Lucas sat behind a table at a press conference for the media in the basement of Gund Arena. They had drafted the player they wanted, but they knew how close they had come to the one bold move that changes everything. "Butler is, I mean Wagner is, a guy who can really help us," Lucas said.

They answered a lot of questions about Miller. Then Paxson rode the elevator upstairs. He went into his office and sat at his desk. "Jim had the whole thing planned perfectly," Bratz said, waiting in the office next door. "We were so close."

Near midnight an exhausted Paxson reappeared from his office with bottles of beer, which he passed around. Looking out a window at the darkness, he nodded slowly and said, "DaJuan is going to bring us a lot of energy next year." □

FROM LEFT: JOHN BIEVER; ROBERT BECK; JOHN W. MCDONOUGH; BILL FRAKES

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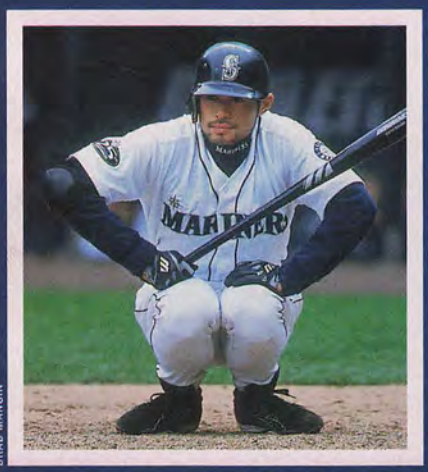
MIDSEASON BASEBALL REPORT

# The Ichiro PARADOX



BRAD MANGIN

## No power, no personality, yet with no peer, the Mariners' Ichiro Suzuki may be the greatest player to come out of Japan and the worst thing to happen to Japanese baseball

BY S.L. PRICE

WHO SITS like this? No American male over six years old and, Lord knows, no baseball player. Players slouch. Players hunch over with headphones on. Players sit like emperors with arms folded. Yet here is Ichiro, on a chair in front of his locker: feet drawn up, heels pressed against his butt, knees together—a position physically impossible, not to mention unacceptably precious, for the musclebound types populating clubhouses these days.

Twenty minutes pass. Ichiro doesn't move. His head is tilted up to watch a TV set hanging from the wall. He stares, grinning. He would look like an amused child, except he's too alert. He looks about as harmless as a panther on a tree limb.

Ichiro is watching a tape of tonight's opposing pitcher. He does this before every game. After batting practice he sits oh-so-cozily amid the clubhouse bustle, looking for weakness. No teammate speaks to him. His eyes shine. He looks hungry.

Pitchers went straight at Ichiro Suzuki last year, figuring to dent his gaudy Japan League credentials, and the Seattle Mariners' 27-year-old rookie rightfielder made them all pay. He sliced up the American League with a .350 average, got more hits (242) than anyone else in 71 years, became only the second man ever voted American League Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player in the same season. No one found a way to neutralize him then, and now, just a season and a half after he hit the beach, American baseball is waving the flag of surrender. At week's end Ichiro—no one bothers with his last name anymore—was hitting .359.

"There's no secret way to get him out," says Boston Red Sox manager Grady Little. "All you can do is concentrate on the other eight guys."

"Impossible to defend," says Ray Knight, the bench coach of the Cincinnati Reds, "but he's a joy to watch."

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHUCK SOLOMON

SEATTLE

Strange words from an opponent, but such is the nature of baseball's Ichiro paradox. He makes contradiction logical. Through Sunday he had but two home runs yet led the league in intentional walks. He speaks little English in a sound-bite era, yields no emotion in a culture that prizes personality; he's a contact hitter in a sport overdosed on power—yet he is baseball's most popular player. This year, for the second season in a row, Ichiro led every major league player in the fans' All-Star Game balloting. Yes, his 2.5 million votes were padded by Internet voters in Japan, but consider: Even on hard ballots filled out mostly in American ballparks, Ichiro topped everyone with 1.7 million votes.

None of this leaves him the least bit mystified. "I'm unique," Ichiro says. "I'm a very rare kind of player."

More than even he knows. There's a Pepsi ad in Japan that pictures Ichiro swinging a bat above the words CHANGE THE WORLD. It's not just marketing. His was supposed to be the tough adjustment, but in truth Ichiro has made few concessions. American fans, pitchers and general managers are the ones scrambling to adjust. Already his success has killed, once and for all, the long-held conceit that a small Japanese player (Ichiro is 5' 9" and 160 pounds) would be overwhelmed in the major leagues. In Japan, meanwhile, it has completely altered the landscape. A mere baseball star when he played there, Ichiro is now an omnipresent cultural icon.

Japanese mornings begin with unprecedented TV broadcasts of each of his games. His face stares from T-shirts, newspapers, subway ads. He is, appropriately enough, both everywhere and nowhere to be found, dominating a nation while squatting in a chair half a planet away. But the Ichiro paradox cuts most deeply across the game he left behind. Ichiro has given Japanese baseball new life, yet by the time he's done, it may be crippled beyond repair.

KAZUO MATSUI is like a lot of young men in Tokyo these days. At the mention of Ichiro his face lights up with wonder. "When I think about him being in the major leagues, it amazes me," he says though an interpreter. "Then I see Ichiro getting two, three hits a game? I get so much out of it."

It is late June. Like most of his generation, the 27-year-old Matsui has spent the last month obsessing about the World Cup and looking to soccer, not baseball, players for style tips. He wears a soccer bracelet and spends several minutes fluffing his thick mop of tinted hair skyward so he can look more like English star David Beckham. "I've always liked Beckham," he says. "He's why I dyed my hair."

The difference between Matsui and his peers, though, is that an hour after adjusting his coif at the Seibu Dome the day before, the durable, switch-hitting shortstop for the Seibu Lions cracked the second pitch he saw for a leadoff home run, played flawlessly in the field and again showed why he may be the best all-around ballplayer in Japan. Los Angeles Dodgers pitching coach Jim Colborn, a former Mariners director of Pacific Rim scouting who coached in Japan, says some three dozen Japanese players could play in the majors. But it's the imminent exodus of top players like Matsui, along with Yomiuri Giants centerfielder Hideki Matsui and Kintetsu Buffaloes third baseman Norihiro Nakamura, that threatens to turn a national point of pride into just another major league farm system.

"Every day, people [in Japan] are watching major league baseball games, and short term, that's not so good for us," says Steve Inow, the former general manager of the Orix Blue Wave who sold the rights to Ichiro to Seattle in 2000 rather than lose him as a free agent with no compensation. "These are difficult times. Japanese baseball is at a turning point. Which way do we go?"

So far, all arrows point down. Attendance and TV ratings for Japanese baseball have been sliding for years, but last season, with Ichiro's Mariners games as competition, the drop was precipitous. Even the bellwether Giants saw their television share drop to 15.1% of viewers last season—the first time the Tokyo-based team's share had

**"Every day, people in Japan are watching major league baseball games," says Inow. "Short term, that's not so good for us."**

PIED PIPER Ichiro's popularity back home may lead more stars like San Francisco's Tsuyoshi Shinjo (right) to join him in the U.S.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KOJI SASAHARA/AP; JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES; KYODO NEWS/AP

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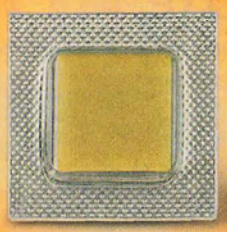

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dipped below 20%. Meanwhile, since 1983 the percentage of baseball viewers 19 years and under has plummeted more than 66%. You can walk the streets of Tokyo for weeks without seeing a Giants hat; you'll see a Mariners logo within an hour. The recession has reduced the number of teams in Japan's Industrial League, its de facto minor league system, from 300 in the late 1980s to 90 today. There has been talk about creating an Asian League with South Korea and China to spark interest, even whispers about contraction.

excited. It shows Japanese superiority to Americans."

It wasn't always this way. Baseball has been played in Japan since the late 1800s, and the Japan League started in 1936, but before 1995 only one Japanese player had made it to the major leagues. Reliever Masanori Murakami appeared in a total of 54 games for the San Francisco Giants in 1964 and '65, and then only because his parent club sent him to the U.S. for seasoning. But in the winter of '95 Kintetsu Buffaloes pitcher Hideo Nomo and his agent, Don Nomura, exploited a loophole in the agreement between Japanese baseball and the major leagues: If a player retired, he was free to play for whomever he wished. Nomo announced his retirement and promptly struck a deal with the Dodgers, and all Japan reacted as if he'd blown a hole in Mount Fuji. The Buffaloes' general manager resigned. Nomo's parents wept and begged him to come home. Nomura's mother and stepfather, legendary catcher Katsuya Nomura, broke off all relations with their son.

"Nomo opened the gate, and at the time people said, 'He's a traitor to Japanese baseball,' " says alltime homer king Sadaharu Oh, who manages the Fukuoka Daiei Hawks. "Now if you're a good player, people ask, 'Why don't you go to the United States?' " Oh likes it better this way. "Why not?" he says. "I wish I had the chance to go."

Nomo's success—he was the 1995 NL Rookie of the Year and at week's end was 10 wins short of 100 for his major league career—led so many other pitchers to take the leap that in 2000 Inow devised the current system of player "posting." Instead of losing talented players when they became free agents after nine seasons, Japanese teams could now sell them to American teams.

Inow sold Ichiro's rights to Seattle for $13 million. The second player to be posted, Kazuhisa Ishii, was signed by the Dodgers in February and was tied for third in wins (11) in the National League through Sunday, but it's the daily success of Ichiro—the first Japanese-born position player to make it in America—that has erased the inferiority complex of his ballplaying countrymen. "Now we feel if you're a good player in Japan, you can be a good player

Yet the success of Ichiro and the 10 other Japanese players now at work in the U.S. not only blunts any popular concern about the health of the Japanese game but also contradicts it. Never have so many Japanese players done so well at so high a level; fans can justifiably say that Japanese baseball has never been better. Last year Robert Whiting, a Tokyo resident and expert on Japanese baseball, appeared on Japanese TV and asked the host, "Doesn't this bother you? You had this great tradition of baseball, and now you've lost it. All your stars are leaving."

The host said, "No, the Japanese are very

## Coming ATTRACTIONS?

Japan has already lost a slew of its best pitchers, and these position players may follow

**HIDEKI MATSUI**
*Centerfielder, Yomiuri Giants*

**.316** BA **15** HR **38** RBIs **.433** On-base Pct.

A free agent and the best bet to test the market in the U.S., Matsui would deal a major blow to the Giants, who are the Yankees of the Japan League, if he were to depart.

**KAZUO MATSUI**
*Shortstop, Seibu Lions*

**.318** BA **16** HR **39** RBIs **13** SB

This Matsui, a switch-hitter, has been more coy about coming to the U.S. and will require a posting fee to the Lions if he's to be signed, but he's considered the best athlete in Japanese baseball.

**NORIHIRO NAKAMURA**
*Third baseman, Kintetsu Buffaloes*

**.302** BA **23** HR **55** RBIs **.672** Slg. Pct.

The righthanded-hitting Nakamura is a free agent and one of the top power hitters in Japan, but there are questions about whether he would be as big a homer threat in the U.S.

*Statistics through Sunday*

YOMIURI SHIMBUN (FAR LEFT); KYODO NEWS (2)

# CAUTION: KETCHUP HAS KICK

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anywhere," says Kazuo Matsui, who's still mulling over whether he wants to be posted after this, his eighth season. "It pushes me even more, having that freedom."

For the next five months, though, all manner of speculation, panic and pride will rain down on Giants centerfielder Hideki Matsui, 28, the free-agent slugger, two-time MVP and former batting champion who is called Godzilla "because I look so scary," he says. The 6' 2", 210-pound Hideki bears the fortunate burden of playing for Japan's oldest, most successful team, an institution combining the prestige of the Yankees and the fan reverence accorded Notre Dame. The Giants always lead the league in attendance and give their stars a profile Ichiro could only have dreamed of when he played in Japan. Giants owner Tsuneo Watanabe has never lost a player to America and speaks often these days about "sports patriotism." But Hideki turned down a long-term contract last year and has spent this season making adjustments in his swing, some say, to prepare for the majors.

The idea that Ichiro's success could spark interest in baseball and blunt soccer's growing popularity seems logical. But it's scant consolation to those who love the proud history of the Japan League. More Japanese kids will want to play, certainly—just not in Japan.

"If Hideki leaves, it's a tragedy," says Jun Ikushima, a Tokyo reporter and co-author with Seattle Mariners reliever Shigetoshi Hasegawa of the book *My Way to Study English*, which became a best-seller in Japan. "Hideki's the best player in Japan now, and the Giants are the symbol of Japanese baseball. It's bigger than Ichiro leaving. We depend on Hideki for so much—his popularity, his dynamism—that if he goes, I can't imagine what will happen. I will feel emptiness. It will be the beginning of the destruction of Japanese baseball."

Fans intent on seeing the best Japanese players will have to follow the trail taken by the stream of jet-lagged Japanese tourists stumbling around Dodger Stadium, Pac Bell Park and Safeco Field. The influx into Seattle has been so pronounced that the team has posted signs in Japanese around the ballpark. "I'd like to say to Seattle baseball people and the mayor of Seattle, 'Please give an award to me,' " Inow says. "Seattle was known in Japan before, but it was not so popular. Now look: Seattle is Ichiro's town, and Japanese people are coming. I need a special bonus."

WHO WAITS like this? More ballplayers each day, it seems. Ichiro's on-deck gyrations have become a Seattle model of cool, with Little Leaguers everywhere trying to keep their faces blank while contorting like pretzels. It is the fourth inning of last Thursday night's game against the Oakland Athletics. Lefthander Barry Zito, winner of nine straight, is on the mound for the A's. As he prepares to step in, Ichiro betrays no awareness that he's enduring his longest drought—0 for 13—of the season. No, as always, Ichiro spends his time running through at least six different stretches. "Same thing every time," says Mariners outfielder Charles Gipson. "He never gets out of the zone."

Ichiro's at bats are clinics in working over a pitcher: stretch, shirt tug, foul, foul, foul, flare to left center. With his maddening skill at making contact, it's nearly impossible to fire three pitches past Ichiro. When he dives after a curveball in the dirt, as Zito induces him to do in his first at bat, "I can't really pat myself on the back," Zito says. He figures Ichiro just made a rare mistake.

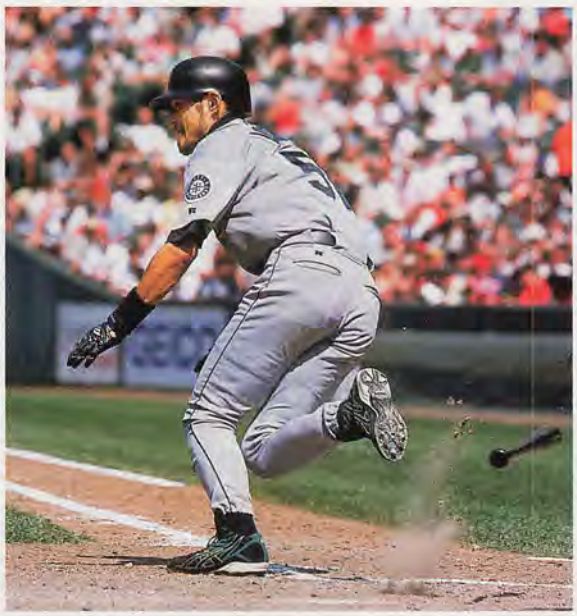
No one makes the game look easier, and for a public happy to interpret Ichiro's few, banal utterances ("Whether it's a good day or a bad day, I look back and find anyplace I can correct myself," he says. "I absorb it, digest it and come back the next day. That's all I can do") as proof of Zen profundity, there's the temptation to believe he received his gift from some monk on a mountaintop. It doesn't quite fit that Japan's master hitter actually grew up an American cliché: Ichiro worked himself to greatness.

His father, Nobuyuki, made him feel special from the start, naming him Ichiro—"first boy"—though he was actually the second. Nobuyuki, a former high school player himself, poured his chosen one into the game, drilling with him every day for four years. By the time Ichiro was a freshman in high school, his competitiveness had been honed to a fine point. It's a tradition in Japan for freshman ballplayers to wash the uniforms of the seniors, so to make sure he lost no daylight practice time, Ichiro would wake up at 3 a.m. to do the laundry. During classes he slept. In his first year as a professional he spent most of his free time in the batting cage, with teammates coming and going from breakfast, lunch, nap, dinner to the endless tattoo of his bat on ball.

So now arrives the perfect Ichiro moment. He slaps a ground ball three steps to the left of first base, but he is so fast that Zito never comes close to covering the bag in time, and what would be a sure out for anyone else ends with Ichiro safe again, a paradox in action. "When Ichiro doesn't hit the ball well, it's almost to his advantage," Zito says. "He's a pain in the ass."

The crowd of 42,159 at Safeco Field erupts. Everyone leans forward, waiting for his reaction. But Ichiro gives nothing away. Somewhere in Tokyo a ballplayer forgets his breakfast for a moment and stares, wondering how it feels to be so very rare. □

**"When Ichiro doesn't hit the ball well, it's almost to his advantage," says Zito. "He's a pain in the ass."**



FAST TRACK Always a threat to bunt because of his speed, Ichiro is leading the majors in hits for the second straight year.

BOB ROSATO

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# The RIGHT Stuff

### KIP WELLS, *Pirates*

AGE: 25 RECORD: 9–4, 3.09 ERA
OUT PITCH: FASTBALL

SCOUT'S REPORT: "Somebody with the White Sox [who traded Wells last December] is going to lose his job, because this kid can really pitch. He can command three pitches and has a sneaky fastball that catches a lot of hitters off guard."

WELLS ON WELLS: "I have a tendency to stay compact on the mound, but at the last second I want to put a little extra on my pitches. You have to hone your skills to the point where you can actually go out there, relax and do it."

AL TIELEMANS

### JASON JENNINGS, *Rockies*

AGE: 23 RECORD: 8–4, 4.77 ERA
OUT PITCH: CHANGEUP

SCOUT'S REPORT: "He's not the kind of guy who blows you away. I keep hearing about his mound maturity. He's 23 going on 33. He knows how to pace himself, how to handle the pressure."

JENNINGS ON JENNINGS: "The key is this: Don't get rattled. Forget that you're facing Mike Piazza or Mo Vaughn. Once you aren't intimidated by pitching in a big stadium against the best athletes in the world, you'll be just fine."

V.J. LOVERO

### VICENTE PADILLA, *Phillies*

AGE: 24 RECORD: 10–5, 3.25 ERA
OUT PITCH: FASTBALL

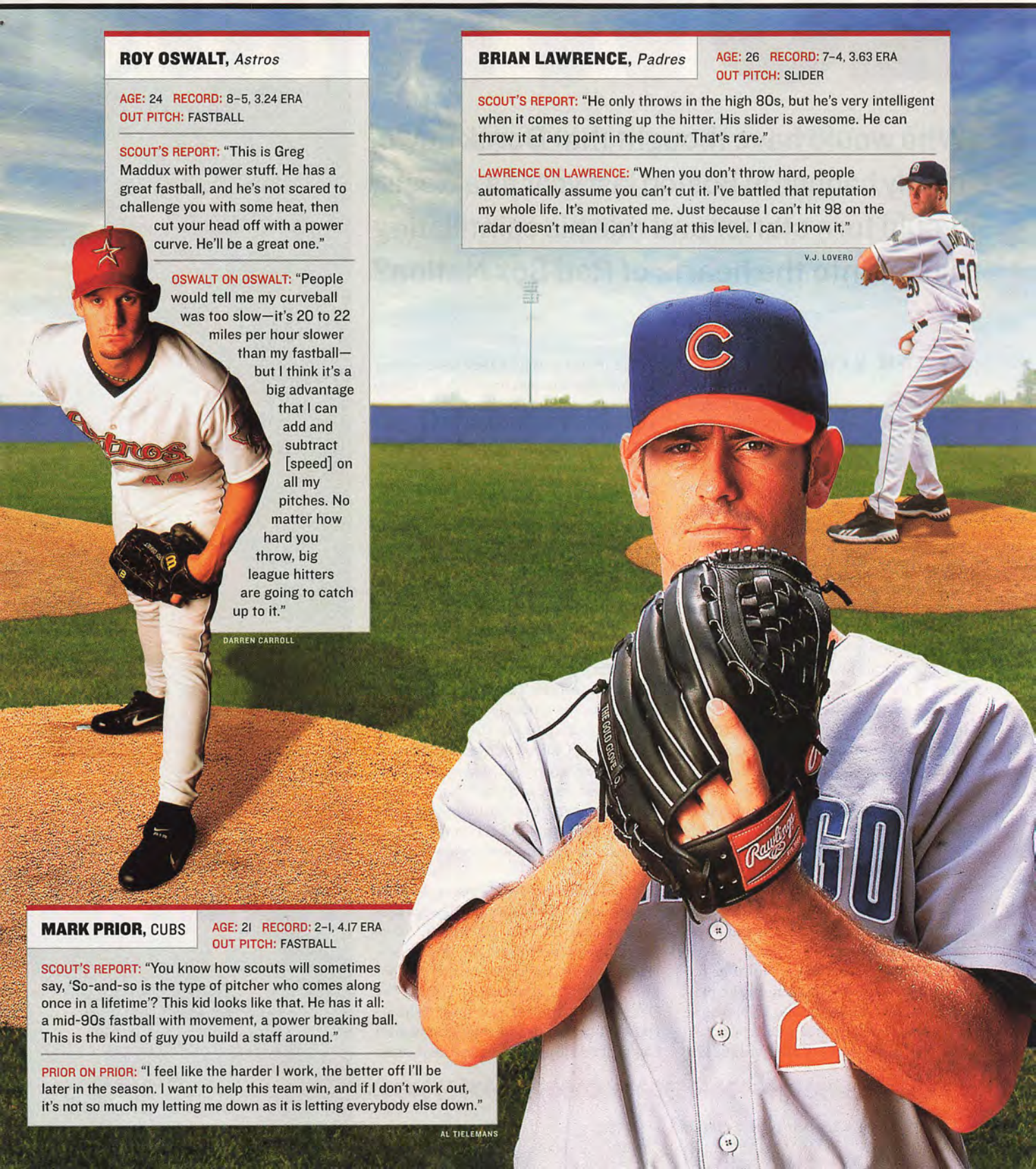
SCOUT'S REPORT: "If they ever start keeping career records for most bats broken, Padilla will be up there very quickly. He's electric. Everyone talks about his fastball, and it lives up to the hype. The thing works like a hard sinker. But he also has a good curve. He's a future stopper."

PADILLA ON PADILLA: "The fastball is my favorite pitch. I don't need to practice it because it comes naturally. But I'm always working on my other pitches, especially the curveball. You have to work really hard, and you have to have confidence. I'm young, but God has given me an opportunity. I do what I need to do to be here."

AL TIELEMANS

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JOE ZEFF

National League teams are scoring nearly half a run less per game than in 2001. Here's a scout's-eye view of six budding righthanders who are helping to hold batters at bay BY JEFF PEARLMAN



**ROY OSWALT,** *Astros*

AGE: 24 RECORD: 8–5, 3.24 ERA
OUT PITCH: FASTBALL

SCOUT'S REPORT: "This is Greg Maddux with power stuff. He has a great fastball, and he's not scared to challenge you with some heat, then cut your head off with a power curve. He'll be a great one."

OSWALT ON OSWALT: "People would tell me my curveball was too slow—it's 20 to 22 miles per hour slower than my fastball—but I think it's a big advantage that I can add and subtract [speed] on all my pitches. No matter how hard you throw, big league hitters are going to catch up to it."

DARREN CARROLL

**BRIAN LAWRENCE,** *Padres*

AGE: 26 RECORD: 7–4, 3.63 ERA
OUT PITCH: SLIDER

SCOUT'S REPORT: "He only throws in the high 80s, but he's very intelligent when it comes to setting up the hitter. His slider is awesome. He can throw it at any point in the count. That's rare."

LAWRENCE ON LAWRENCE: "When you don't throw hard, people automatically assume you can't cut it. I've battled that reputation my whole life. It's motivated me. Just because I can't hit 98 on the radar doesn't mean I can't hang at this level. I can. I know it."

V.J. LOVERO

**MARK PRIOR,** CUBS

AGE: 21 RECORD: 2–1, 4.17 ERA
OUT PITCH: FASTBALL

SCOUT'S REPORT: "You know how scouts will sometimes say, 'So-and-so is the type of pitcher who comes along once in a lifetime'? This kid looks like that. He has it all: a mid-90s fastball with movement, a power breaking ball. This is the kind of guy you build a staff around."

PRIOR ON PRIOR: "I feel like the harder I work, the better off I'll be later in the season. I want to help this team win, and if I don't work out, it's not so much my letting me down as it is letting everybody else down."

AL TIELEMANS

# LOWE and

## Who would have thought that **Derek Lowe,** nearly banned in Boston last year as a closer, would turn starter and ride his scintillating sinker into the hearts of Red Sox Nation?

**BY TOM VERDUCCI**

THIS YEAR he is the American League ERA leader, a 6' 6" righthanded starter seemingly blessed from the cradle with a wicked limbo dancer of a sinker that on the best of days is certifiably unhittable. Last year he was afraid to leave his own clubhouse. If the path to stardom for Derek Lowe didn't exactly pass through hell, it did have to traverse Yawkey Way, the street outside of Fenway Park that is typically lined with the most willful of Boston Red Sox fans waiting for the players to exit their parking lot.

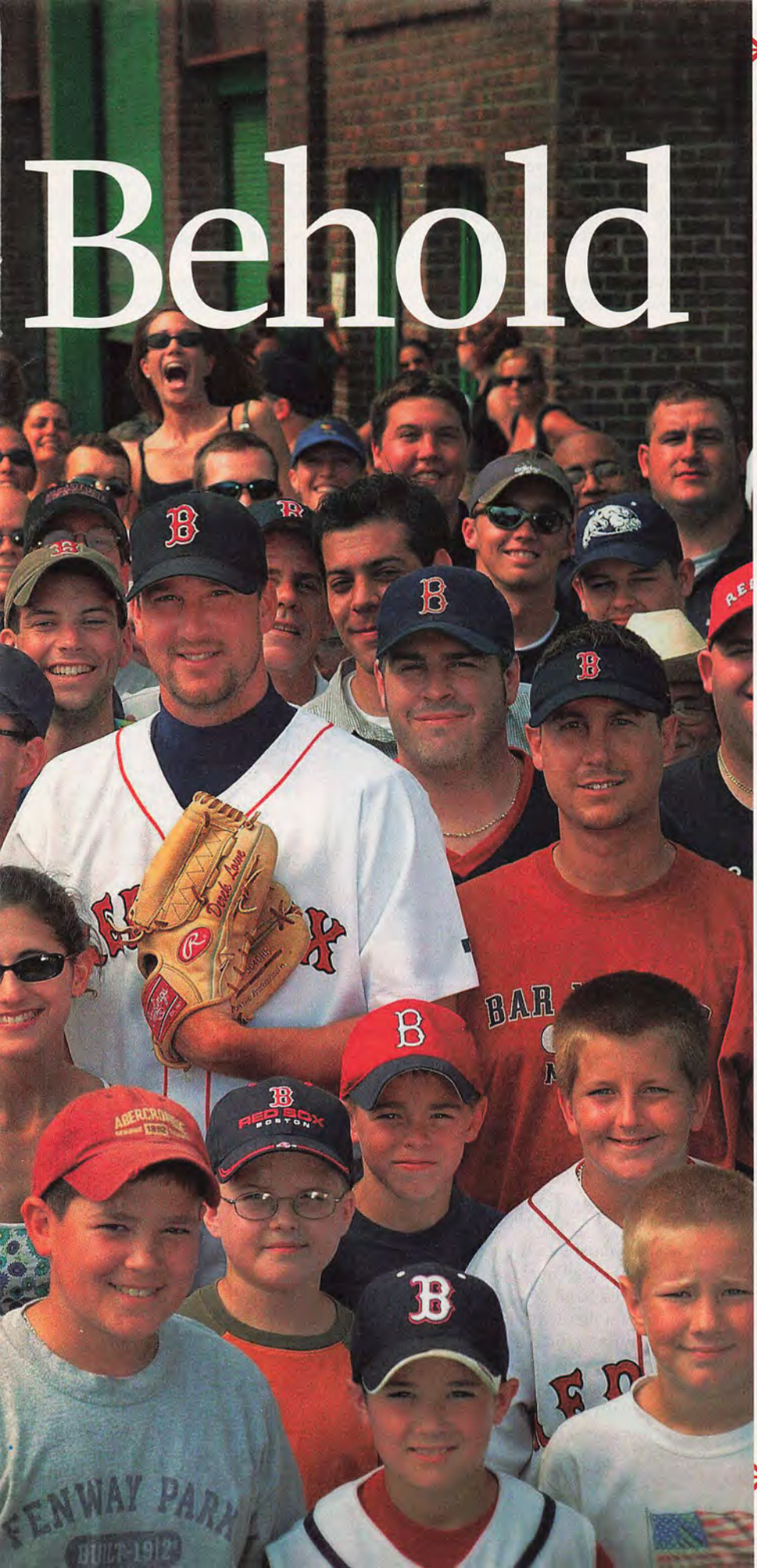
Lowe, then a reliever, could not bring himself to face the gantlet last Aug. 31, not after having served up his third game-tying or game-winning home run of the season to the dreaded New York Yankees. He had grown weary of fans' spitting and pounding on his car and rocking it. He didn't want to find out what might happen this night, not after he had blown a 1–0 lead in the eighth inning when Yankees catcher Jorge Posada had taken him yard with a runner on. So Lowe turned the clubhouse into his personal fallout shelter.

He hunkered down there until he figured that even the most clinically helpless of the fans had gone home. Maybe those were some of the same people who accounted for the stacks of mail wishing him traded or dead. Maybe they were among the fans who shouted profanely for him to sit down every time he stood to warm up in the bullpen. Maybe some of them had been at Fenway on Derek Lowe Poster Night, and had been among those who angrily heaved scores of the giveaways onto the field in protest of another Lowe-light, this time a blown save against the Seattle Mariners.

By the time Lowe decided it was safe to head home, it was nearly 1 a.m. Yawkey Way was indeed abandoned. "That was the lowest point," Lowe says of hiding in the locker room. "I waited two hours, at least, just sitting there in the clubhouse. It got so bad last year that I remember days when I'd pull out the schedule and pray to God we were coming up to the last day of a home stand. Or if we were on the road, I'd always want to get [called in to pitch during] the last game of a trip before we went back to Fenway, hoping I'd have a good game so they wouldn't get on me so bad. The last day of a trip was always very important for me."

Ten months later Red Sox fans are picking up his tab at restaurants. Besides possessing that AL-best 2.18 ERA, Lowe (11–4) was at week's end the league's coleader in wins, the proud owner of a no-hitter (April 27 against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays), one of the most reliable starters in baseball and, strangest of all, a fan favorite. He also might well be the best

 PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN HUET




running mate ace Pedro Martinez has known in his five seasons in the Boston rotation. Not since Rosie Ruiz beat all the other women to the finish line in the 1980 Boston Marathon by allegedly skipping most of the course has the Hub seen a more unlikely winner than Lowe, whom *The Boston Globe* described this spring as "once among the most reviled figures in the sports-crazy metropolis."

Lowe, 29, is more than halfway home to joining Wilbur Wood (Chicago White Sox, 1970 and '71) as the only pitchers in history to save 20 games and win 20 games in back-to-back seasons. (Lowe had 24 saves in 2001.) He has gotten this far with an apparent ease exceeded only by that of his egress from a suddenly friendly Fenway. Through Sunday, Lowe had allowed two runs or fewer in 12 of his 16 starts, held batters to a .193 average and permitted only four home runs.

"There's no doubt in my mind it's the most dominating run of pitching I've ever seen," says Red Sox righthander John Burkett, a veteran of 14 major league seasons. "I pitched with Billy Swift in '93, Kevin Brown and Al Leiter in '96 and [Greg] Maddux and [Tom] Glavine last year, but I've never seen anything close to this."

Says centerfielder Johnny Damon, "With the great pitchers you feel like every time they go out there, you have a great chance to win. With Derek it's been more than that. Every time he goes out there, he has a chance to throw a no-hitter."

Indeed, Lowe was unhittable on that April Saturday against the Devil Rays. He since has given each of more than 30 Boston players and staff members a $1,500 watch inscribed with the date, opponent and DEREK LOWE NO-HITTER on the back. Even before such generosity, Lowe was popular in the clubhouse for his gregarious, playful nature.

"*Goofy*, that's the word I'd use to describe him," says catcher Jason Varitek, Lowe's teammate since 1995. "He's a lefthander trapped in a righthander's body."

Lowe has been known to play pickup basketball games at public courts in cities throughout the American League. He once skipped out of the visitors' clubhouse at Yankee Stadium for a full-court run in a Bronx park across the street. He's also a

**SAFE AT HOME** A Fenway whipping boy last season after his many blown saves, Lowe is now the toast of Yawkey Way.

six-handicap golfer with a knack for helicoptering clubs. "I don't get ticked off playing baseball like I do in golf," Lowe says. "In baseball if you do everything right, you'll make a good pitch, and chances are you'll get the guy out. In golf you can do everything right, and maybe the ball hits the top of the bunker and rolls in. Luckily, the Titleist people take care of us. I'll tell them, 'I need a new driver.' And they'll go, 'Didn't you just get one?' And I'll say, 'Oh, yeah. It's on the bottom of a lake on the 12th hole somewhere in California.' "

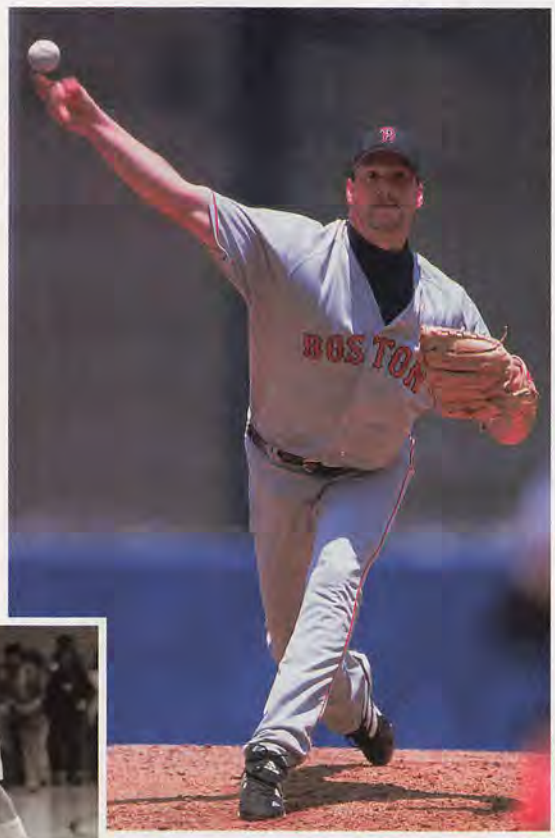
Says infielder Lou Merloni, a native of Framingham, Mass., "If Derek were a girl, people would tell blonde jokes about him. But you know what? In Boston nothing's tougher than blowing games to the Yankees. He stood there and took the heat last year. He said, 'Right now I'm horrible.' He never hid from the media."

Pitching solely in relief, Lowe suffered losses in five of his first 11 appearances last season. When the Yankees beat him in August, he was 4–10 for a team that otherwise was 67–52. By then the Red Sox had replaced him as their closer by acquiring Ugueth Urbina in a trade with the Montreal Expos. Joe Kerrigan, then Boston's manager, gave Lowe three starts in September. "I think he's more relaxed as a starter," said Kerrigan. "There's no margin for error as a closer." In those outings Lowe went 1–0 with a 1.13 ERA.

**BALL GAMES**
Derek was a star guard in high school, where he first threw his natural sinker.

After the season Kerrigan (who would be replaced by Grady Little on March 11) told Lowe to prepare to be a starter in 2002. On Oct. 15 Lowe, who has never thrown more than 170 innings in any pro season, began a weight training and eating regimen (four to five meals a day). He gained 25 pounds over the winter, bringing him to 230. "After the 2000 season I went on [an all-star] tour of Japan and got back November 18," Lowe says. "I never truly worked out that winter. I had a lousy spring training and got off to a bad start. Did I work as hard as I could? No. That was something I could do something about. I was in the gym in October doing squats. I had never done squats in my life. My goal was to show up in spring training ready to start the season—throwing all my pitches and being sharp from the first day."

Short relievers are the demolition experts of a pitching staff. They rely on raw force and quick detonations. By contrast, starting pitchers must face the same hitters several times over; thus they operate with the measured hand of an archeologist. To prepare for the switch to full-time starter, Lowe refined his curveball and changeup, added a cut fastball and, most important, made his signature sinker—which is essentially a two-seam fastball that drops—more versatile. As a reliever, Lowe threw the sinker to the same spot every time: away to lefthanders and in to righthanders. Now he can throw it at a lefthanded batter's hip and have it run back over the inside corner.




"This year I'm using both sides of the plate," he says. "I'm also coming inside to lefthanders and sinking it away to righthanders. I was never able to do that before. I've had times this year when righthanders have taken three [strikes] away while looking for the ball in. My delivery is different. . . . When people ask me what's the difference between this year and last year, they're looking for one thing—but there's a lot of things."

Says Martinez, the only one of 27 Boston starters over the previous three years to win at least 14 games or pitch at least 200 innings, "His ball breaks down a foot, a foot and a half. It's amazing to watch."

The sinker, which Lowe began throwing in high school as his natural fastball, was his ticket to the big leagues, even if he didn't know it in 1991, when as a 170-pound senior at Edsel Ford High in Dearborn, Mich., he was All–Suburban Eight League in baseball, basketball, soccer and golf. After averaging more than 30 points and making all-state as a guard, Lowe planned to play basketball at Eastern Michigan, until the Mariners drafted him in the eighth round. "Never saw it coming," he says about interest from baseball scouts. "And if you saw me pitch then, you wouldn't have, either. I pitched O.K., but it wasn't like I was great."

"Every time Derek goes out there, **he has a chance to throw a no-hitter**," says Damon.

Six years later, in one of the most lopsided trading-deadline deals in history, Seattle sent Lowe and Varitek to Boston for journeyman reliever Heathcliff Slocumb. Boston turned Lowe into a reliever. In 2000 he rode his sinker to the All-Star Game and 42 saves.

"People think I've got some strange grip or throw it a certain way," Lowe says. "I just hold it on two seams and throw it as

MILLARD BERRY/DEARBORN PRESS & GUIDE (LEFT); JOHN W. MCDONOUGH

hard as I can." By keeping his hand inside the ball—that is, slightly on the left side of it—Lowe imparts not only a downward action but also one that makes the ball run, or dart away from a lefthanded hitter.

Though Lowe packs more hardware in his pitching tool belt this year, the sinker remains his hammer. The day after Lowe shackled the White Sox on May 20 (two hits over eight scoreless innings), Chicago slugger Frank Thomas told Boston bench coach Mike Stanley, "It's like he has a remote control with that pitch—like it's a video game, and he can make the ball go down where he wants it."

In an overwhelming June 16 win over the Atlanta Braves (one run, seven hits through seven innings), Lowe threw 98 sinkers among his 104 pitches, leaving Braves manager Bobby Cox to say, "He literally can pitch with one pitch. He's that good."

"He has the most movement on a fastball that I've ever seen in my life," adds Atlanta leftfielder Chipper Jones. "I used to think Kevin Brown in his heyday had the best I'd ever seen. But he was throwing 93, 94 miles an hour, and it was like trying to hit a cannonball. Lowe is throwing 88 miles an hour, and it looks like you can hit it, but then it moves a foot. I'm telling you, he can throw a ball right down the middle of the plate, and it actually moves so much [down and away] that it winds up out of the strike zone. And he threw me one sinker that actually moved [inside] under my bat, so I know he can make it go both ways."

Lowe faced 129 batters in June and permitted only 11 fly balls. Still, Little has handled Lowe with caution because of his substantially increased workload this year. Lowe has exceeded 100 pitches only seven times, never throwing more than 111. (In his no-hitter he threw 97.) Lowe, following the advice of Burkett and pitching coach Tony Cloninger, has cut back on the duration and intensity of his side sessions between starts.

Even as he performs brilliantly, of course, Lowe knows that if he starts to slump in the second half, Red Sox fans could turn on him again. After all, from Heartbreak Hill to Yawkey Way, Bostonians take to skepticism the way monks take to prayer. Rosie, it turned out, was too good to be true. □

*To see Tom Verducci's picks for midseason MVPs and top rookies, pitchers and managers, go to cnnsi.com/baseball.*

In the game of prognostication you use every available tool. We've gazed into our Magic 8 Ball to see how the remainder of the season will play out

BY STEPHEN CANNELLA

# All the ANSWERS

## Will Barry Bonds make history again?

*Signs point to yes.* This time Ted Williams's season record for on-base percentage, .553 in 1941, is in peril. At week's end Bonds had an on-base percentage of .571; he was hitting .345 and had drawn 103 bases on balls, also putting him on pace for the first 200-walk season in history. (He set the major league record, 177, last year when he finished with a .515 OBP.) The combination of pitchers' reluctance to challenge him, Bonds's discerning eye and his locked-in stroke make it a good bet that the Giants slugger can stay ahead of Williams's mark all season. Otherwise, thanks to a resurgence in pitching—at week's end scoring had dropped from 9.7 runs per game last year to 9.2, and hits were down from 18.2 per game to 17.6—no other major batting records are expected to be broken.

Barry Bonds

## Are the Expos going to fight to the death?

*Most likely.* Still on the short list of teams Bud Selig wants to eliminate as part of contraction at the end of the season, Montreal stocked up for a playoff run last week by acquiring Indians ace Bartolo Colon for first baseman Lee Stevens and three prospects. Through Sunday the Expos were 42–38 and 8½ games behind the Braves in the NL East and six games in back of the Diamondbacks for the wild card. Whether Montreal makes the playoffs or not, Frank Robinson deserves to be Manager of the Year.

## Will there be many other trades before the July 31 deadline?

*Outlook not so good.* With the possibility of a work stoppage, the normally booming midseason trade talk could be a murmur this summer. Among the teams looking to make deals are the Indians, who want to unload outfielder Ellis Burks, lefthander Chuck Finley and first baseman Jim Thome (Burks and Thome would have to waive no-trade clauses); the Phillies, who will entertain offers for third baseman Scott Rolen; the Tigers, who will give up righthander Jeff Weaver for the right price; and the Yankees, who are trying to pry rightfielder Cliff Floyd from the Marlins.

## By season's end will there be any managers left named Manuel?

*My sources say no.* The likely firing of Charlie Manuel by Cleveland and Jerry Manuel by the White Sox would complete one of the bloodiest seasons ever for skippers. Detroit, Milwaukee, Colorado, Kansas City and Toronto had axed their managers by the first week of June. The White Sox (40–42) have been one of the majors' biggest underachievers. The payroll-slashing Indians are on the way to their first sub-.500 finish since 1993, and new general manager Mark Shapiro is almost certain to bring in another skipper to oversee the rebuilding project.

## Will the best division battles be out West?

*As I see it, yes.* Think the World Cup wreaked havoc on your circadian rhythms? The tightest races this year will play out while most of the country is falling asleep. The Mariners, Athletics and Angels will fight it out in the AL West, and the schedule should make for a stirring finish. Two of those three teams will play one another on each of the last 20 days of the season.

Another three-team race

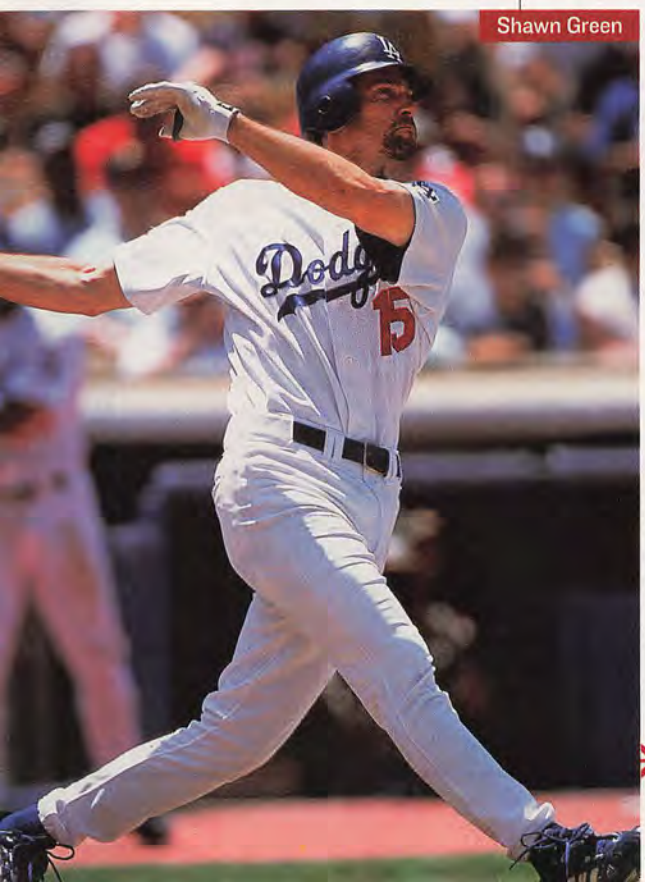
 CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DAVID N. BERKWITZ; BOB ROSATO; BRAD MANGIN; PETER READ MILLER; BRAD MANGIN

John Smoltz

looms in the NL West, but if starting pitching becomes the deciding factor, the Giants may not be able to keep up with the Diamondbacks and the Dodgers.

## Will Bonds win his fifth National League MVP?

*My reply is no.* All those walks will keep his RBI total (50 this season, compared with a career-high 137 last year) down. By the end of the season streaky Dodgers rightfielder Shawn Green (.281, 25 homers, 63 RBIs) will be remembered for more than his four-homer game and four dingers in four at bats over two games earlier in the season. He'll carry the Los Angeles offense down the stretch and will earn his first MVP award.



Shawn Green

## Could Alfonso Soriano win the AL MVP award?

*Without a doubt.* Ichiro has the speed and bat skills. A-Rod has the power. The Yankees' Soriano has it all, and he's a strong candidate to become the first second baseman to win the American League's top honor since Nellie Fox of the White Sox in 1959. In his second full season Soriano, 24, was all over the league leader board through Sunday: first in steals (23) and total bases (202), second in hits (111), tied for third in runs (60), fourth in batting (.324) and tied for sixth in home runs (19).

## Will the Braves' bullpen turn out to be legit?

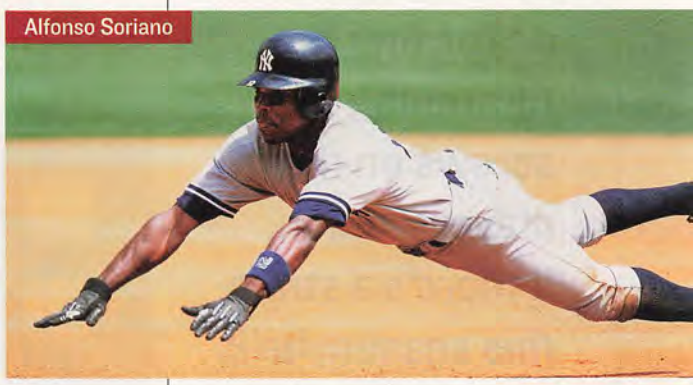
*Hazy, try again.* Gryboski, Hammond and Spooneybarger sound like partners in a small-time law firm. Actually, middle relievers Kevin Gryboski, Chris Hammond and Tim Spooneybarger—with a combined four major league appearances over the last three seasons—all have ERAs under 3.33 and are key to the majors' best relief corps. Mix them in with veterans Mike Remlinger (5–0, 1.56), a career setup man, and closer John Smoltz (27 saves), and you have a bullpen with a 2.34 ERA and 19 wins, both tops in the National League.

## Then will Atlanta win its 11th straight division title?

*It is decidedly so.* With the Mets and the Phillies out of the picture, the slow-starting Braves will wind up cruising in the NL East. In addition to that bullpen, they have a potent offense led by the recharged Gary Sheffield (seven homers, 21 RBIs in June) and Rafael Furcal (.343 June average). Filling out the NL playoff field, the Cardinals will rebound from the loss of Darryl Kile and win the Central, and (sorry, Expos) the Dodgers will finish just behind the Diamondbacks in the West and take the wild card.

## Can the Red Sox dethrone the Yankees in the AL East?

*Very doubtful.* A healthy New York rotation is too tough to overcome. Boston couldn't break away while righthander Orlando Hernandez and lefty Andy Pettitte were hurt, and now both are back. The Red Sox finish the season with 21 of their final 24 games against lightweights Toronto, Tampa Bay, Baltimore and Cleveland, which will enable them to claim the wild card for the third time in five years. Rounding out the AL postseason grid, the Twins, with two injured starters expected back in the rotation by the end of July, will win the Central, and the Mariners will outlast the A's in the West.



Alfonso Soriano

## Will there be a strike?

*Cannot predict now.* The expiration of each of the eight previous basic agreements has resulted in a work stoppage. Sporadic talks in recent weeks have done little to bring the two sides together on major issues, including revenue sharing, a payroll tax, contraction and drug testing. "It looks like it's heading in one direction, and that's confrontation," says Atlanta's Mike Remlinger, the team's assistant player rep. "I'd love to see it end up amicably for both sides, but unfortunately I don't think that appears to be an option right now." □

*For more analysis from Stephen Cannella, read his* Touching Base *column every Thursday at cnnsi.com/baseball.*

# SUICIDE Squeeze

**Bud Selig** has put his legacy on the line by tightening the screws on the players' union. If there's a strike this season, he'll be the one who takes the fall

**BY FRANK DEFORD**

**ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS PAYNE**

BECAUSE HE appears to be so ordinary a leader, so humdrum a personality, so artless a communicator, Bud Selig has been dismissed by the fans, mocked by the media and reviled by the players, so that it has generally escaped notice how much has really taken place on his watch. Baseball's administration has been reorganized, its divisions reshuffled, its schedule radicalized, its playoffs pizzazzed. Under his aegis the owners have been taught, at last, to share (if not to share alike), and they are more unified than ever before.

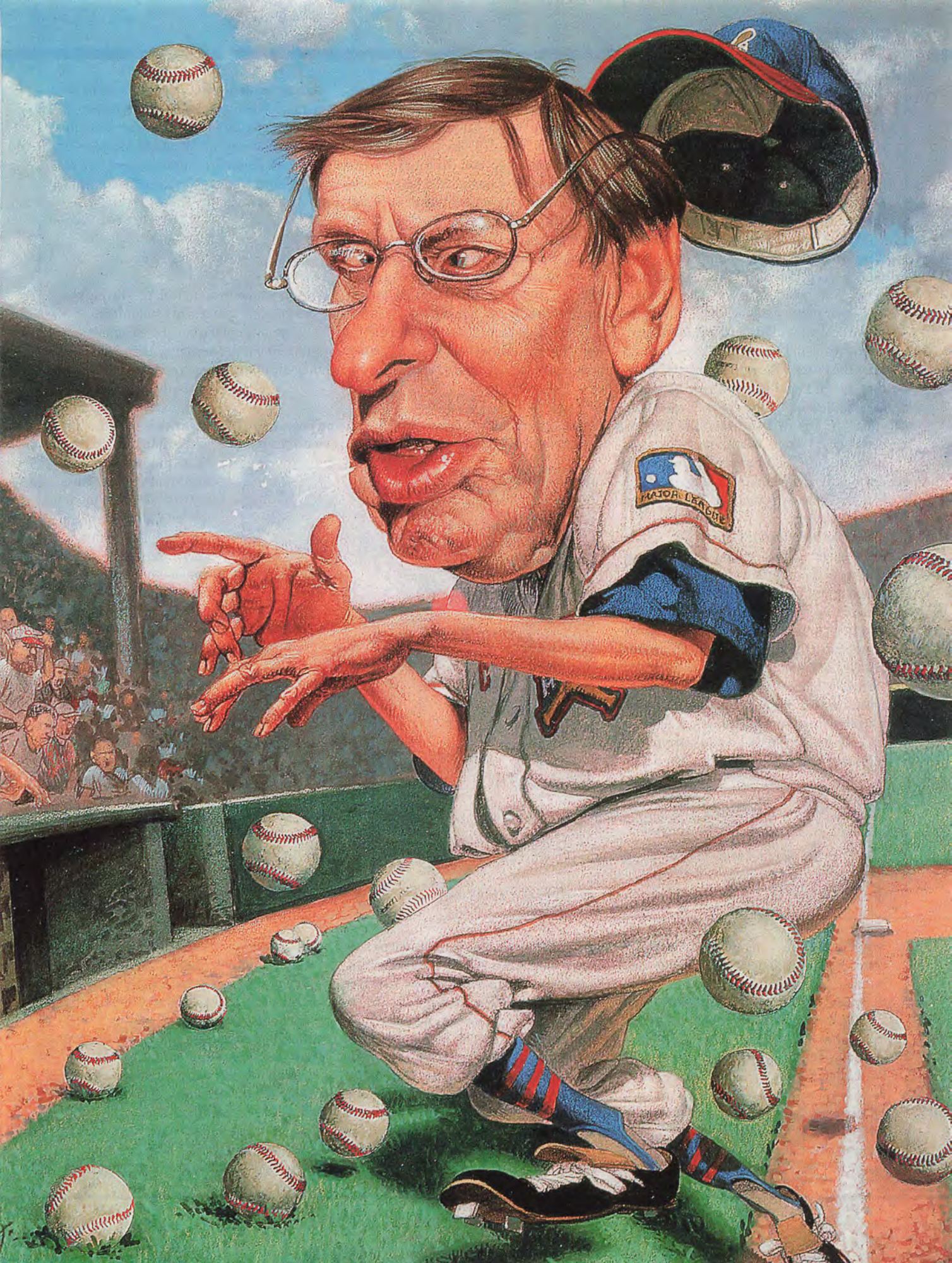
Because he has been dismissed by the fans, mocked by the media and reviled by the players, it has *not* generally escaped notice that under his leadership baseball has suffered a work stoppage, canceled a World Series and seen its salary structure run amok, its competitive balance leeched away and its labor relations reduced to a blood feud.

But in the summer of 2002, all that history—Selig's and baseball's—doesn't matter. The only thing that matters is whether there will be another strike, another battering of the public trust. After all, this is not a choice time for endowed institutions to test the patience of the American citizenry, not after both the Roman Catholic Church and Wall Street have so shattered faith. Besides, baseball, which itself poses as religion and business alike, is already vulnerable enough to cynicism because of the stench of drugs that clings to its bulging heroes.

So, practically and emotionally, baseball has very little wiggle room—and, fair or not, Bud Selig knows that if a strike is averted, he will get the credit, and if owners and the union step off into the abyss together again, he will forever be the one who takes the blame.

THE SUITE of offices of the commissioner of baseball is so grand that the commissioner doth protest (perhaps too much) that he should reside in such spacious splendor. "This is inconsistent with the rest of my life," Bud Selig poor-mouths, there in his 30th-floor aerie, in the tallest building in Milwaukee, looking out over the city's new art museum just below and, at some remove, a flat Midwestern vista with smokestacks that emit and interstates that point and a smooth great lake that stretches away to the horizon.

On a hazy day, around to the right, you might also see back to 1951, to a sandy-haired young man sitting alone on a dirt pile, watching County Sta-


MAJOR LEAGUE

dium being built—an edifice that when constructed would entice the Boston Braves to uproot and move to Milwaukee (the first franchise in half a century to be transplanted), thereby changing baseball forever. In the long run the move would make life better for Milwaukee but much more difficult for baseball commissioners.

At the moment, though, on the 30th floor, the commissioner, his assistant, a receptionist and two security officers toil in tranquility. Usually the commissioner talks endlessly on the telephone to the delegates of his baseball federation, all the while imbibing Diet Cokes, the one after the other. This is the height of apostasy, since Pepsi is a sponsor of Major League Baseball, but, as Bud's wife, Sue, says, "Bud is just so habitual." He has drunk Diet Cokes—out of glasses or cups, never out of cans—forever. So, too, every day has he munched on cold raw vegetables that his assistant, Lori Keck, brings him as a snack.

She has been with him for 30 years, having started back when Selig was owner of the Brewers, a nettlesome crusader who brought baseball back to his beloved Milwaukee after Atlanta seduced the Braves away. Back then Selig's office was hardly more than a dusky cubbyhole in the nether reaches of County Stadium, and he was viewed by his amused owner-colleagues as no more than an eager young pup who could recite baseball arcana just like the actual fans do. No one could have imagined that this unobtrusive backbencher would eventually emerge as not only the commissioner with the most authority ever but also as a zealot determined to match the union in adamantine righteousness.

Still, some things never change. When he breaks for lunch every day, the commissioner gets in his Lexus, and, listening to Sarah Brightman, he drives back near to where the new Miller Park is, where County Stadium stood before it was demolished, to the Gilles Frozen Custard stand on West Bluemound Road. There he orders a hot dog with ketchup and (of course) a Diet Coke, which he consumes in his car, away from the hurly-burly, reading newspapers. According to Ms. Keck, "Once in a blue moon he orders a grilled-cheese sandwich." Variety is, after all, the spice of life. Fridays he drives over to get his hair cut at Tony Lococo's. Before Tony cut his hair, habitually, Fridays, Tony's father did.

Some days there is excitement for the few denizens of the 30th floor, as owners arrive in Milwaukee from Shangri-las afar for a meeting. Or the commissioner's subalterns have flown in from baseball's headquarters, on Park Avenue in New York City. Alas, that address is what Sue Selig had envisioned when the owners made an honest man of Selig in 1998. At that time, after six years as acting commissioner, they excised the qualifier and formally made Buddy the ninth official czar of the national pastime. Anyway, sighs Sue, "I thought we'd be lucky enough to move to New York." But Bud Selig was born and bred in Milwaukee, sallying out only to bivouac nearby in Madison for college, and he remains forever a Cheesehead. Well, there is a nice symbolism to it. Maybe he who runs the national pastime should be Main Street, not Park Avenue. Commissioner? One almost expects to see this, below a transom, upon a frosted glass door:

BASEBALL
*Bud Selig, Prop.*

And so the owners trek to Milwaukee. The mountain comes to Muhammad.

Wayfarers enter a circular reception area with a round rug depicting a baseball. They may sit upon a bench made of bats and bases, there to read baseball history books and view other memorabilia of the diamond. In New York the walls of the headquarters feature rows of television monitors and glitzy displays, baseball as glamour. In Milwaukee the presentation is more homespun, baseballiana. The 30th-floor suite is found, you see, at the confluence of the man and his love.

Bud Selig has an adoration for baseball. Admire him or detest him, this is the first thing anybody says about Bud Selig. Baseball was even the corespondent in his divorce from his first wife. "From the day that Bud became involved in baseball, he divorced me and married baseball," the first Mrs. Selig, Donna, swore to the court in 1976. The judge agreed, declaring that her husband had "unduly absent[ed] himself from the home of the parties and isolat[ed] himself . . . in pursuit of his baseball interests to the detriment of his marriage."

So the artifacts on display on the 30th floor are testament to the love that dares shout *Play ball!*, interspersed with certain telling mementos of the man himself. Let us inspect them now.

First, in the entrance area, encased in glass upon the wall, is a black Louisville Slugger, Allan H. Selig model. That is the

**WIRED** Selig spends his workdays (vacation days, too) reaching out and touching someone who owns a team.

JAMES SCHNEPF

**Selig is a constant purveyor of gloom. Hello, Bud, what's new? And he is off. Well, he just heard from this team. It's losing money hand over fist.**

*Frank Deford's commentary appears every Wednesday on cnnsi.com. For more on the labor negotiations, go to the "Owners vs. Players" link at cnnsi.com/baseball.*

**»»»»»»» Most owners had their first glimpse of the young Selig as he trailed after them like a nasty terrier, chasing an expansion franchise.**

signature found on official major league baseballs, too, even if, as the commissioner testifies, no one since his sixth-grade teacher has called him Allan.

Bud. It is such a very uncommissioner-ish moniker. Hiya, Bud. Bud, yo, you. Fill it up, Bud. But Selig is genuinely comfortable with being Bud, or, in the affectionate diminutive, Buddy. After all, he has had the name all his life, since the very day he was born, when his mother, Marie, advised his older brother, "Now you have a buddy." Marie Selig was so very prescient. Her son's success is, at the nub, based on his being a pal, a chum. He is the quintessential . . . buddy.

Says Fred Wilpon, the co-owner of the New York Mets, "Buddy connects with people. He is patient and willing to listen to other points of view. We've had lots of things to be really angry about, too. But there has not been one day—one day—of acrimony with Buddy. He is what he is."

And what, exactly, is that? Exhibit A is displayed prominently upon a wall in another room, where owners and other petitioners relax while awaiting an audience. It is a gauche certificate attesting to the fact that Commissioner Selig has been selected to appear in *Who's Who in America*. Here, surely, is the sign of the insecure Selig, the son of immigrants; the shy outsider, the Jew; the Midwesterner; the (in baseball lingo) small-market guy; the neo-Babbitt, whose family fortune comes from selling cars. As Groucho Marx might say, if you have to proclaim that you made *Who's Who*, maybe you really aren't a *who* after all.

Next, in the commissioner's office itself, at the front of his desk, facing out to exactly where any journalist will sit to interrogate him, is too perfectly placed that rather condescending remark of Teddy Roosevelt's, the one that belittles the scorekeepers of society ("It is not the critic who counts") while elevating the bolder man who puts himself on the line, down "in the arena." Selig was no good at sports, but he is a very competitive sort, damn proud to be down in the arena and, in singular contradiction to his reputation as an accommodator, unafraid to bark back at those picayune bystanders who dare carp at him. His wife refuses to read anything about Bud, lest she encounter a negative report, but he searches out his reviews—"I'm just a masochist, I guess," he says—and then, unlike most public figures, picks up the phone and challenges his critic. "The people who have raised the most hell are those who don't know me," he says. "I just can't understand them getting personal."

PAUL J. SHANE/AP

**PITCHMAN** Selig (in '68) landed a team for Milwaukee through sheer dogged effort.

But it is in the other wing of the suite, in the conference room, above the great long table where the owners convene, that the most revealing framed statement hangs. It is written out as a poem, but there is no rhyme or rhythm to it, and capital letters appear capriciously. It is unattributed (though, in fact, written by Calvin Coolidge), rough but nonetheless see-through, an unadulterated ode to Bud Selig.

*Nothing in the world can take*
*The place of Persistence.*
*Talent will not; Nothing is more*
*Common than unsuccessful*
*Men with talent; Genius will not;*
*Unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.*
*Education alone will not;*
*The world is full*
*Of educated derelicts.*
*Persistence and Determination*
*Alone are omnipotent.*

That is why Bud Selig rose to become commissioner of baseball: to persist doggedly so that he might save his game from the financial destruction he is convinced the unforgiving union will bring down upon it. And, while we're at it, it is also very likely why George W. Bush became president of the United States of America.

NOTWITHSTANDING HIS naturally sunny constitution—the man was a car salesman, after all—Selig today is a constant purveyor of gloom. It drives his alter egos in the players' union crazy, because, of course, they want the world to think that the well can never run dry. But, like a Weather Channel announcer pointing out "watch boxes" around the nation, Selig regularly cites the latest franchise crises. Hello, Bud, what's new? And he is off. Well, he just heard from this team. It's losing money hand over fist. And that one called yesterday: It can't find a buyer. Neither can this one. It just called again. Team X—Team X!—just called, and even if it draws x.y million, it loses. The grim litany is forever upon his lips whenever a Diet Coke is not.

"I know the frustration of the owners," he wails. "I grew up in this game, and the frustration level has never been so high. We're whipsawed. We can't make it the way things are. We need a systemic change. I don't see how anybody can come to any other conclusion. This game that you and I grew up with can't sustain itself. That's why I can't have this Scarlett O'Hara thing. I can't wait until tomorrow." He makes a steeple with his hands, takes off his glasses, points fingers. "I never said this before. I shouldn't say this."

Say what?

"All right, I'll say it. I told the owners not long ago that if there was one mistake I've made as commissioner, it was that I should've let a couple teams go bankrupt."

So why didn't you?

"I thought it was bad for baseball."

But now, Selig opines, sadly, bankruptcies might be good for baseball, because only then will baseball's sneering critics understand that he is not blowing smoke. Unfortunately, however, he always must contend with the sins of the fathers. The owners have cried wolf since time immemorial. They moaned that free agency

would skewer baseball, but in fact the sport's popularity soared, and a wide cross-section of franchises prospered. Then, when operating in the thrall of the domineering and distant Peter Ueberroth (the Commissioner from FedEx, so called), the owners were caught at collusion. Their pique grew at being bossed by a disdainful outsider, even as their public laments rang hollow and they were fined $280 million for their deceit. So now when things really may be desperate, there is a tendency to disbelieve the commissioner's bleats—especially since he was generally regarded as one of the architects of collusion and since he was himself renowned as Budget Bud and "the best crier in baseball" long before his colleagues placed his lugubrious eminence upon the throne.

ball's tales of woe, but, in fact, approximately $320 million of the purchase price went for 80% of NESN, the New England Sports Network. Thus, at a time when the NFL sold an expansion franchise—in fact, just a piece of paper—to Houston for $700 million, one of the two or three most hallowed franchises in baseball effectively cost $340 million, including ownership of a sacred stadium on prime Boston real estate.

Cable television has been, it seems, the poisonous ingredient that has so fouled fair competition and led to a situation in which the richest team has local operating revenues 22 times larger than the poorest. Another more pertinent example: The Yankees make almost twice as much money from *radio* as the Brewers—which remain in the Selig family, now run by Bud's daughter, Wendy Selig-Prieb—make from TV.

sure as once he could get you GMAC financing for your new Oldsmobile.

"In a nutshell," Moag writes in his formal report on baseball, "the failings of baseball are escalating player costs and the fact that only a small minority of franchises can afford to lure and/or retain the best players." Sandy Alderson was the brilliant general manager who built championship teams in Oakland a decade ago. He left to become a vice president on Park Avenue because he wearied of the futility of discovering and showcasing players who would then be U-Hauled away by the richer teams. "In the old days the Yankees had access to everybody on the Kansas City roster," Alderson says, with only a touch of hyperbole. "Now they have access to everybody on every roster."

**Selig's first owners' meeting was devoted to labor. "It was the angriest meeting I'd ever been in," he says, "and it's never gotten any better."**

*Forbes*, for example, came up with its own rosy figures this spring, disputing the ones Selig provided under oath to a Congressional committee, before which he was pilloried and, essentially, branded a flat-out liar. The esteemed Jesse Ventura, erstwhile XFL shill and governor of Minnesota—home of one of the teams the commissioner reportedly planned to eliminate—sat next to Selig, smirking and sniping at him. Unlike the overseers of other sports, baseball commissioners have become figures of fun.

Ironically, the players' association does not dispute Selig's figures that show a combined $232 million loss for major league teams in 2001. "However," says Gene Orza, one of the union's associate general counsels, "the conclusions we reach are quite different." (Neither Orza nor the union's executive director, Donald Fehr, would consent to speak about Selig or the ongoing negotiations.) It is also true that, historically, annual losses in baseball have been beside the point because owners could always unload their franchises for huge profits. But now?

"The bigger fool theory!" Selig cries out. "Gone. Gone. There are just no buyers. Nobody." Softly now, almost a whisper: "Nobody."

The recent sale of the Red Sox for $660 million appeared to contradict base-

For the first time, as labor negotiations intensify, public perception seems to have shifted, and there is no longer the glib tendency to cry "a plague on both your houses." More and more neutral observers are accepting Selig's pessimism. John Moag, a Baltimore investment banker who specializes in sports franchises, last year offered a "positive outlook" for baseball. Now? Because of the looming labor impasse, he says, "Baseball owners are at the bottom. The curve is very, very bad, because the sport's economic structure is flawed. If there's a strike, values will plummet." Moag points out that as recently as 1994, NFL and MLB franchises were essentially selling for the same amounts. Since then, football franchises have come to double baseball franchises in value. Estimates of major league baseball debt run upward of $3 billion—credit lines primarily arranged by Selig, as

**BOY SCOUT** Selig (in '83) won over other owners by taking on the least desirable duties.

There have always been poorly managed losing teams, but ultimately what has changed in baseball, alone among team sports, is that now only a handful of clubs can give their fans reasonable hope. To Selig this is essentially a theological issue, even if it manifests itself as an economic one. After all, in what is always referred to as "the entertainment world," when a fan loses hope nowadays there are simply too many other diverting options for him to throw his "entertainment dollar" at. For baseball to survive, Selig believes, it needs greater revenue-sharing between the haves and the have-nots, as in the NFL; some kind of ceiling on salaries, as in the NBA; and the dissolution of up to a half-dozen weak-sister franchises so that the remaining clubs might thrive.

The players' association is the night nurse that stands in the way of the game's ingesting all these nostrums. And the players' association never loses. This time, though, at least the owners are presenting a fairly united front. "Yeah, we're closer together now," says Stan Kasten, the Braves' president, "but that's only because every-

SEAN KARDON/AP

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body's desperate, and it's gotten like something out of Kafka."

But if the dismal financial circumstances have created a climate in which the owners will at last get on the same Kafkaesque page, it has then been Bud Selig—talking, kibitzing, cajoling, commiserating—who has brought his company in misery together. He is of them, he has been with them in the arena—in the trenches, everyone says melodramatically—and so the owners have put their trust in their nondescript colleague who has been belittled as Bud Light and Kenesaw Molehill Landis. Make no mistake: Bud Selig holds the scepter. "I have more authority than any other commissioner ever did," he crows, "and I can count. I have the votes to do what I want to do."

WHOEVER SAID, *Whatever you do, don't volunteer*, never met Bud Selig. Volunteering has been the key to his ascendancy. While helping operate his father's automobile agency, he took it upon himself as a "civic duty" to restore baseball to Milwaukee. In that chivalrous capacity he chased after expansion franchises and, after losing out to the likes of Kansas City, Montreal, San Diego and Seattle, only just failed to get the White Sox to move 90 miles north in 1969. Indeed, most owners had their first glimpse of the young man as he trailed after them like a nasty terrier, yipping at them, waiting for them next to the potted palms as they emerged from another meeting and tried to brush by him. "Oh, to baseball I was a leper," he admits, rather cheerfully.

That aggressive behavior was foreign to Selig's nature, too. Although Sue married him in 1977, the two had been friends going back to high school, and she remembers that when kids gathered at her house, her mother would ask her, "Who is that shy boy who always sits in the corner?" That was little Buddy.

It was his own schoolteacher mother who nurtured Buddy's love for baseball. It was Marie who for his 15th birthday took him to New York to see the Yankees (and *South Pacific*). But young Bud revered his father, Ben, always seeking his approval. After college he wanted to get his doctorate and become a history professor, but he gave in to his father's entreaties—"Just give me one year, Buddy"—tried the family trade and gave up any dream of academia. "Well, I liked the retail business," he says. "I like people."

Perhaps only once did he cross his father, and, of course, it was baseball that led him astray. That was in 1957, when he played hooky from an accounting class that he needed to pass in order to work in the automobile agency. Instead, Selig hied himself to County Stadium, where his heart stilled as he watched Henry Aaron slug a homer off Billy Muffett (of course he remembers the pitcher) to send Milwaukee into its first World Series.

Despite this uncharacteristic lapse in discipline, Selig became an apt businessman, but he found his purpose in life only in the quest to restore major league baseball to his beloved city. His persistence paid off when the desultory Seattle Pilots went belly-up in 1969 and Selig and his partners snatched them out of bankruptcy court for $10.8 million. "No matter what happens, my proudest achievement will always be getting the Brewers, getting a team back to Milwaukee," he says. Perhaps more important, that giddy success against the odds—Mission Impossible, Milwaukeeans of little faith had called it—leaves Selig convinced that the owners can triumph against the union, if only they hold fast together and persist. "His faith never wavered," Wendy Selig-Prieb says. "My father was always so sure that he would get us a team. And I have that child's recollection, which is why I believe so fervently in him now. He will not back away."

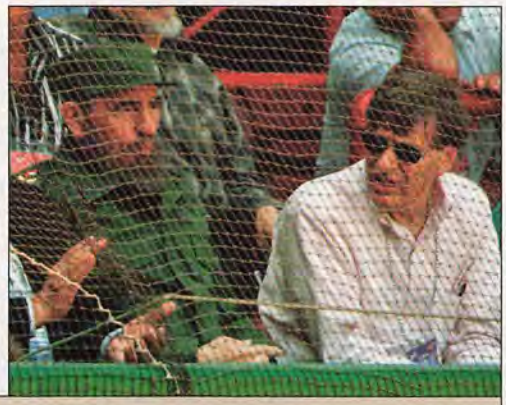
As soon as Selig got his team and was safely ensconced in the owners' club, he found himself awed by the company. There are reports, notably in *Lords of the Realm*, John Helyar's comprehensive business history of baseball, that anti-Semitism flourished among some owners and was directed particularly at Marvin Miller, the indefatigable head of the players' association. Selig was only the third Jewish owner at the time, but he professes to have had no awareness of prejudice. Maybe he heard what he wanted to from his idols. "I never personally sensed it," he says.

What he does remember vividly is his first owners' meeting. It was devoted to one topic: labor. "It was the angriest meeting I'd ever been in," Selig says. "And you know, it's never gotten any better." He went home and plaintively asked his father, "What have I gotten into?"

Still, Selig venerated the older owners, gentlemen of his father's generation such as John Galbreath of the Pittsburgh Pirates, Jerry Hoffberger of the Baltimore Orioles and, especially, John Fetzer of the Detroit Tigers. Selig would plot his journeys home from league meetings through Detroit, so that he might be alone with Fetzer. It was Fetzer who most passionately preached the gospel of sacrifice. "Bud," Selig remembers him saying, "if you do what's in the best interest of baseball, it will be best for the Detroit Baseball Club." Selig pauses; just the remembrance of his old counselor almost makes his eyes well up. Then with a smile of happy reminiscence he says, "Mr. Fetzer . . . I called him Mr. Fetzer at first. I was just a kid. Mr. Fetzer always said 'the Detroit Baseball Club.' Not the Tigers. The Detroit Baseball Club. The Milwaukee Baseball Club."

But then Selig looks out the window, over Lake Michigan. "When Mr. Fetzer was going to sell out, in 1983, he called me up,

**TALKIN' BEISBOL** Selig sat with Fidel Castro when the Orioles played Cuba's national team in '99.



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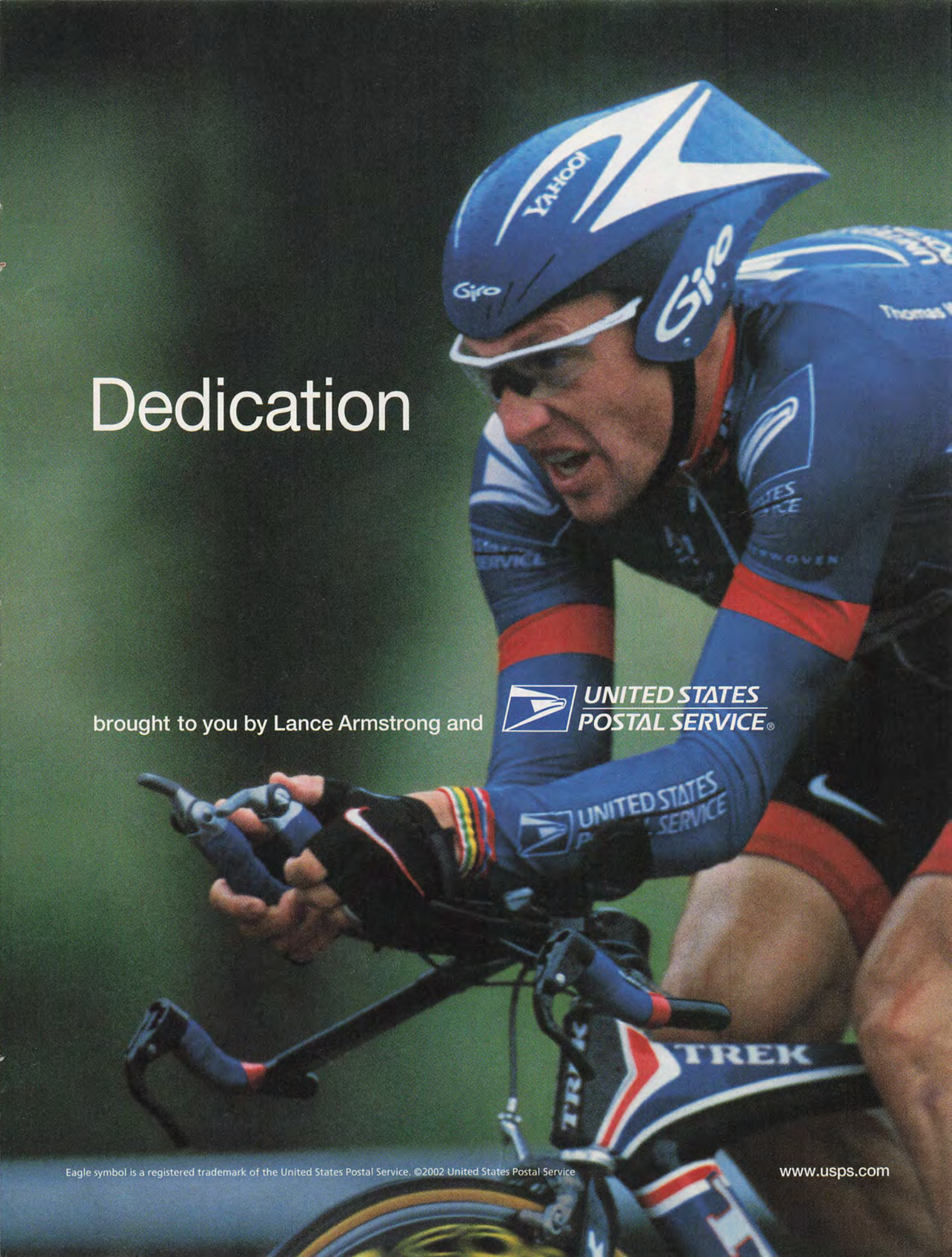
> "I have more authority than any other commissioner ever did," Selig crows, "and I can count. I have the votes to do what I want."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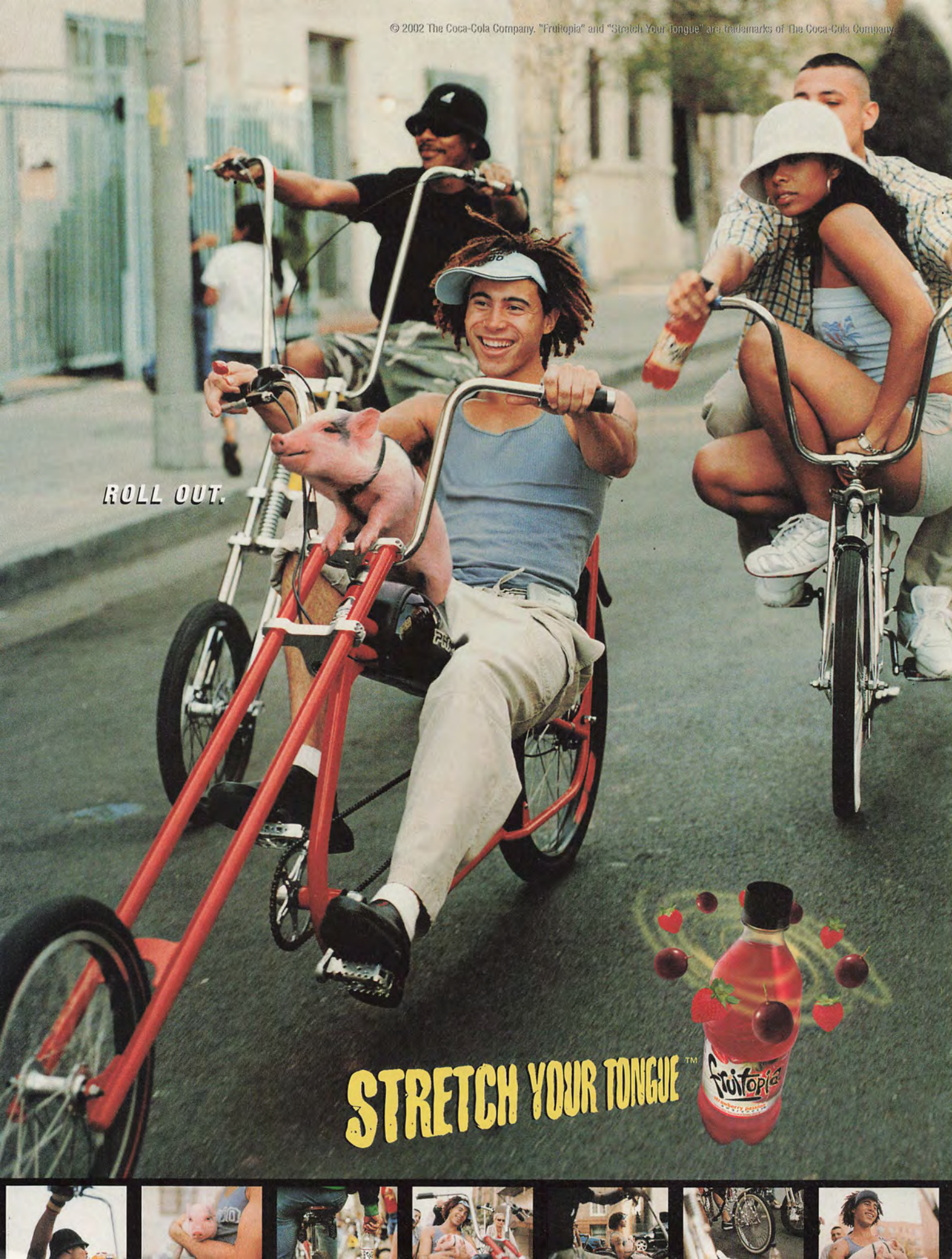

and I went to Kalamazoo, and he told me. He said, 'Buddy, selfishness has taken over.' Apart from my father, John Fetzer played the greatest role in my life. Why, when something came up in the Executive Committee just today, I got up and walked around and thought about Mr. Fetzer."

Because it was something disagreeable that came up?

"Yes." He nods morosely.

The youthful Selig ingratiated himself with his surrogate fathers, offering to sit on committees that nobody else would bother with. Fay Vincent came into baseball in 1989, serving at the right hand of the new commissioner, Bart Giamatti. He laughs and says, "Bart and I would just sit around and say, 'What would happen if we didn't have Bud to take on the thankless, miserable jobs?' "

By now Selig had been in the inner circle for two decades. He wasn't the kid anymore. If he wasn't yet quite out front, he had found his way to the center of things. Selig was a clearinghouse of information, gossip and intrigue. All the owners not only knew Buddy and liked him well enough, but they also knew what Buddy knew. He was the original 24/7/365 man, keeping the minutes of baseball. "When my father is on vacation," Wendy Selig-Prieb says, "he sits on the deck in Arizona and does the same thing he always does—talk on the phone to the same people about baseball. His vocation and avocation are the same." He has extra time every day for substantive activity, too, because he doesn't play golf.

The one way Selig does relax away from baseball is by reading, history mostly. Presently he is going through Robert Caro's third volume on Lyndon Johnson, which concentrates on LBJ's legislative genius. It's easy to see why Johnson interests Selig. Both men rose up as insiders, not popular leaders. But LBJ was a bold, outsized figure who took charge of the Senate almost as soon as he got off the train at Union Station. Selig—as befits a small-market owner—more resembles one of those unimpressive little congressmen from a hinterland state who builds up power over time, accumulating authority from privileged knowledge more than from presence. Bud Selig never grabbed anyone by the lapels.

He often comes to the party late, in fact, only after he's seen the other RSVPs. Most recently, for example, he had to be brought round to the idea of contraction. However, "once Bud's locked onto the issue du jour, he never lets go," says Bob DuPuy, Buddy's buddy from Milwaukee who now serves as president of Major League Baseball. "He's like the salesman to whom you finally scream, 'Stop, stop, I'll buy the policy just to get rid of you.' " In many respects, too, Selig's greatest successes have been of the Nixon-goes-to-China variety.

**CROWD PLEASER** Selig (with Sammy Sosa) pressed for popular innovations like wild cards.

DAVID GUTTENFELDER/AP

> Selig is comfortable being Bud. His success is, at the nub, based on his being a pal, a chum. He is the quintessential ... buddy.

It was under the bend-an-ear direction of Selig, the weepy diamond traditionalist, that the owners finally reached consensus on splitting the leagues into three divisions, adding wild cards and allowing interleague play, innovations that still strike baseball fundamentalists as sacrilege but that have been hugely popular with fans.

"Bud has no great intellectual capacity," says Vincent, who became commissioner after Giamatti died suddenly in 1989, "but he just keeps at it, and he's really very good at politics. But that's also his liability, because he tends to agree with everybody he talks to. He wants to keep everybody happy."

Selig adored Giamatti, perhaps only slightly less than he did the sainted Fetzer. When first they met, one night in New York when Giamatti was still president of Yale, the two baseball votaries walked the streets after dinner, in rapture, reveling in shared nostalgia. A discussion, nearly theological in nature, of a 1949 home run by Johnny Lindell—Johnny Lindell!—cemented the friendship. Sue Selig says that the first speech her husband ever wrote out was his eulogy at Giamatti's memorial service.

After Giamatti's death Selig was at first a staunch supporter of Vincent's, but eventually he turned against the new commissioner. More than anything, Selig soured on Vincent's conciliatory attitude toward the union. Vincent believed in rapprochement, and he thought it could be achieved only over time, so, as a first gambit toward peace, he hired Steve Greenberg as deputy commissioner. Greenberg, who represented the owners at the negotiating table in 1990, is a respected and cordial baseball insider (he had been a players' agent) and, just as important, he was friendly with Fehr and Orza. Selig disapproved of this pussyfooting, and, as head of the Player Relations Committee, he not only hired Richard Ravitch, a lawyer and politician, to run the negotiations but also gave him a salary higher than Vincent's. If not emasculating to the commissioner, this was insulting. "Bud's got a much more facile mind than people give him credit for," DuPuy says. "Vincent underestimated him terribly."

Finally, Selig called for Vincent's head. Making an emotional speech to his fellows on Sept. 3, 1992, he began, "This is a very traumatic day. In the beginning I considered Fay an appendage to Bart, the best friend I'll ever have." However, Selig said, "I was one of the last to come to the conclusion that Fay must go, [that] he really doesn't care for the institution." The no-confidence vote was 18–9, and Vincent soon resigned. It was then that the owners decided to stay within their own farm system and promote Selig to acting commissioner.

Many observers felt that it was a regency, with Jerry Reinsdorf of the Chicago White Sox as the real chief. Time has shown that to have been a gross misconception, but there is no agreement about whether or not Selig joined the Vincent putsch because he was motivated by his

own desire to take control. Selig himself maintains that he never had any designs on becoming commissioner, that he truly believed what he told his wife: that he'd only be warming the commissioner's seat for a few months. Even as the years wore on, Selig says, he never fancied the position. Sue Selig says, "I knew he'd be commissioner long before Bud himself realized it." The other owners maintain that Selig had no ulterior motive and had to be talked into taking the job.

Selig's critics laugh up their sleeves at that. The union leaders, who manifestly distrust Selig, have whispered that his canny manipulations in procuring the position reveal the commissioner's true self. As early as 1989, Charles O'Connor, the owners' lead labor negotiator at that time, told a disbelieving Vincent that Selig had set his cap for the job.

Whereas such national figures as New York governor Mario Cuomo and Senate majority leader George Mitchell seemed inclined to accept the position—"It's really amazing who would want this awful job," Vincent mutters—the tide turned against offering it to an outlander. The head of the selection committee was Bill Bartholomay, the chairman of the Braves and surely the only person on the face of the earth to have met all nine commissioners. (He sat on Judge Landis's knee when he was a five-year-old.) "We talked seriously to a lot of people," Bartholomay says, "but we never came close to picking an outsider. And Buddy was the obvious insider."

Well, except for. . . .

"All George W. Bush wanted was to be commissioner of baseball," Vincent says. "He'd talk to me about it after they ran me out, and he'd say that Selig was going to get him the votes, and I'd say, 'George, I don't think he's going to deliver for you.'

"By then I finally understood that Bud wanted the job, and the last time I talked to George W. about it, I said, 'Do you believe me now?' And he said: 'Yes, I'm beginning to understand.'

"George W. had to make a decision then, whether or not to run for governor in '94. A lot of people wanted him to run, but he didn't think he could beat [the incumbent] Ann Richards. It was only when he finally realized that Bud wasn't going to step aside that he decided to try it. It is my contention that one man made George W. Bush president, and that man was Bud Selig."

Accepting an invitation from the commissioner, the President threw out the first ball at Miller Park, the Brewers' new stadium, when it opened last year.

GEORGE MITCHELL, one of those men of distinction who wanted the job Selig got, once explained why a facility to appear and declaim impressively on television was so crucial for any public person. "It's just an attribute of leadership in our time," Mitchell said. "People cannot ridicule or demean it. Two centuries ago the ability to ride a horse and wield a sword were attributes of leadership."

Alas, as the face and voice of baseball management, Selig does not cut an impressive figure. After all those man-hours on the telephone, he is styled for chitchat, not oratory. The passion that is so obvious in casual byplay tends to come across more as whining when he is before a microphone. Words are not his best friends. Inside baseball, people still snicker about an unsigned memo of a few years ago that employed the word *analization* for analysis. It was instantly attributed to Selig.

The commissioner is healthy and looks young for his 67 years, but his hair often drifts down into something of a page boy. Selig also buys perfectly nice conservative clothes, but they don't dress him up so much as wear on him. Carl Pohlad, the Minnesota owner, even provided Selig with a considerable wardrobe in a wistful effort to turn the rumpled commissioner into more of a Beau Brummell. When he ran the Brewers, Selig reminded the players of Jerry Lewis. For his looks, not his antics.

What he is, is a kidder, always teasing his friends and associates with cracker-barrel humor. Selig will introduce a good friend and say, "Everybody says he's a gentleman. I don't know why." Guffaw. Or, "Look at those old shoes. See, on the bottom it says, 'Vote for McKinley.' " Guffaw. He revels in this kind of badinage. Altogether he's genial, a likable fellow, just folks, who can laugh at himself for being the classic adoring (rhymes with *boring*) grandfather.

In professional matters, however, he is thin-skinned. Selig insinuated himself into national commissionerdom after being a beloved local icon, and it may have been especially hard for him to adjust to a job that comes with built-in criticism. Wistfully, as he peers over the Milwaukee landscape, he says, "There was never a cross word for me here. In fact, I was a hero for a long time."

In point of fact he did lose some of his native luster in the past few years when he employed all his tenacious buttonholing skills to get the Wisconsin legislature to pass the bill to construct Miller Park mostly with state funds. The disputatious measure passed by one vote—that of a legislator from Racine, who was promptly recalled by his furious constituency. Still, for most Milwaukeeans, once again their Bud Selig had brought them added baseball pleasure: not only a fancy new ballyard with a retractable roof, but also an All-Star Game to go under it in 2002.

**The passion that is obvious in casual byplay comes across as whining when Selig is before a microphone. Words are not his best friends.**

**FROG PRINCE** Fellow owners have tried to make a virtue out of the unimpressive figure that Selig cuts.

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Certainly, though, Selig should have been prepared for the slings and arrows hurled at him from outside Greater Milwaukee. After all, he is a genuine student of the position he holds, a Plutarch of himself. "I am a history buff," he says. "I do everything in the retrospect of history [sic]. I've studied the commissioner's office year by year, and I believe I understand this office better than anyone on the face of the earth." He crosses to his refrigerator and cracks another Diet Coke. "For example," he goes on, "Ford Frick. He was underestimated as a commissioner. He was so prophetic." Indeed, much as U.S. historians cite George Washington's famous valedictory, so Selig quotes highlights of Frick's farewell address in 1965, when, way back then, he warned the owners that they simply must accept some change in the operation of their game or suffer the consequences.

But Selig found out early on that his fellow owners were unyielding. Reluctantly, since the anecdote might offend a dead man, he tells the story of visiting St. Louis with one of his Milwaukee partners in 1967 there to meet Gussie Busch, who owned the Cardinals. With Busch was Dick Meyer, a trusted lieutenant at both the brewery and the ball club. "Someday we'll be gone, Mr. Busch," Meyer said, "but these young men will be the ones who are going to have all the trouble if we don't make a change in the reserve clause."

It was not an extreme or unreasonable observation, but Busch absolutely stunned Selig and his friend, pounding his cane, screaming at Meyer, "Don't you ever say that again, Dick, or you'll be fired."

That attitude was typical, as the owners kept fighting the last war. "The lords of baseball," as they came to be called about the time Selig became one of them, were ridiculed, portrayed as the silly little top-hatted pip in Monopoly. Meanwhile the union had the law and fairness on its side, and while the players were unified behind Marvin Miller and then Fehr (with Orza), the lords kept changing their negotiators as willy-nilly as George Steinbrenner changed managers. Besides, not only were the owners divided, but they also often clashed with their own commissioners. So the moguls never laid a glove on the working stiffs. "Fehr and Orza are remarkably talented, and they're intellectually superior to most people in baseball," Vincent says. "And, of course, they're ideologues. They take economic issues and turn them into moral issues."

"Truthfully, we weren't even negotiating," says someone who once participated in the collective bargaining on behalf of the owners. "It was a joke. It was all just p.r. You should see it: The union plays the owners like a harp. It's not Selig's fault. And the owners aren't as stupid as they're depicted. It's just that each is driven by his own self-interest."

Says the Braves' Kasten, who is also president of Atlanta's Hawks and Thrashers: "In basketball or hockey David [Stern] or Gary [Bettman] says, 'Well, we've studied it, and here's what we're gonna do,' and everybody goes along. In baseball there'll be 30 different opinions." Trying to unite baseball owners recalls what Trent Lott once said about how difficult it is to keep a party of senators together: It's like "loading bullfrogs into a wheelbarrow."

Even Selig admits, "I told the executive committee: Just once I'd like to be Paul Tagliabue." Indeed, he can cite the business history of the NFL—how the noble gridiron owners all sacrificed and chimed the Three Musketeers' refrain—as well as he can recount esoteric baseball statistics.

Of course Selig has been able to use the current baleful economic situation to help create a new common cause among the owners. Remember those times of yore when the owners were split into big-market and small-market caucuses? Nouveau-riche franchises such as Baltimore and Cleveland smugly aligned themselves with New York and Chicago and Los Angeles. Today? Selig says that the so-called big-market bloc consists only of the Yankees and the Mets and maybe the Dodgers. The owners' erstwhile best friend of labor, Peter Angelos of the Orioles, is now, Selig avers, "about the biggest hawk we have."

The owners feel so comfortable deferring to one of their own that they have granted Selig a provisional sovereignty that no commissioner since Judge Landis has been accorded—and that back when the very existence of the sport was jeopardized by the Black Sox scandal. The lines of communication are clear; Selig has his own handpicked deputies, DuPuy and Rob Manfred, staffing the front lines, across from Fehr and Orza. Paul Beeston, formerly the president of the Blue Jays, was the owners' chief negotiator until he quit a few months ago, and the whispers are that Selig found him, like Vincent and Greenberg, too much of a softy and overruled him, so Beeston quit. Selig says Beeston was homesick for Toronto; Beeston ain't talking. Whatever, it only underscores the obvious. However blame is apportioned for the strike of 1994, which cost baseball a World Series, Selig was the acting commissioner, even if authority was divided. This time there is no qualification: Diamond Armageddon is strictly on his watch.

**PEOPLE'S CHOICE?** The owners and Selig (with Fehr in '90) for once seem to have public opinion on their side.

DAVID CANTOR/AP

**Ironically, the labor roles are now reversed: It is the players' association that appears to be arguing on behalf of the status quo.**

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"Buddy is clearly our head of labor—as he should be," Wilpon of the Mets says. "If he has the responsibility, he must have the authority."

Perhaps, though, it is the propaganda battle that will ultimately prevail. Sure, as always, the owners can lock out and the players can strike, but after past disasters does either side dare loose its ultimate weapon against the other and risk enormous collateral damage? After all, it is the fans who feel they are the wronged party now. The system has robbed too many of them of hope, the emotional circumstance that allows Selig to position management as fighting for Good and not just for Mammon. For the first time, the owners appear as relatively sympathetic creatures. They do not seem to be lords anymore so much as doleful knights errant, their castles breached, their fields fallow. It's gotten even worse for them this season. Attendance is down, and new stadiums are, apparently, no longer a panacea; been there, seen that. It is now the players—with their wealth and imperious manner—who are the object of scorn.

Ironically, even the labor roles are now somewhat reversed, as it is the players' association that appears to be arguing on behalf of the status quo. Says Sandy Alderson, his eyes mischievously glowing, "The pendulum has swung so far the other way that I think the union is as arrogant today as the owners were 30 years ago. They're the ones who've lost the foresight and the flexibility to improve the game now."

Certainly the owners can try and portray the union as standing foursquare against those two American bulwarks, hope and equality. After all, the beleaguered fans are no longer naïfs to the business of sport, and they know that in this collective bargaining the union is essentially holding out against the very positions that have made the NFL and NBA competitively healthy. Moreover, even if the owners secretly like all those steroid-stung home runs their muscular stars hit, it is the union that refuses to accept random drug testing. The players' association has managed to become just about the only sports organization in the whole world that refuses to support drug testing. And now the players' blind support for their leaders smacks less of unity and more of servility. The moral high ground that Marvin Miller secured back when Gussie Busch was banging his cane against decency has been lost.

Ah, but luckily for the players, the commissioner gives the union a convenient bogeyman to flay. "Bud's vulnerability is almost unavoidable," says Alderson, "and it's obvious that the union has decided that the best way to undermine our message is to dehumanize the messenger." As long as the union can depict Selig as a hypocritical, Enronesque wheeler-dealer, cooking the books and feathering his own nest, the players might keep sympathetic public opinion from settling down with the owners. Almost surely, no commissioner in any sports labor dispute has been such a central figure as Selig is in this contretemps.

Of course, it was the owners who painted the bull's-eye on Selig when they opted for an old-boy commissioner. And, eyes wide open, Selig took the $3 million a year and the big hometown office in the sky and the charter plane on call and the other perks well aware that all of that would have to be paid for with a big bite out of his own hide. Whatever proposals the commissioner offers on behalf of baseball are dismissed as camouflage for improving the lot of the family store, the Brewers. It particularly puts Selig on the defensive that while Milwaukee fielded one of the worst teams in baseball last season, management made little effort to use revenue-sharing bonuses to buy better players—all the while pocketing more profit than any other franchise. Yes, even more than the Yankees. Selig responds by claiming that 2001 was an aberration, that the team had lost money the previous eight years and only went into the black because of the fresh attraction of the new Miller Park. "I knew that when I was taking this job, there'd always be this inherent conflict of interest," Selig admits. "I knew there'd be people who'd make something of that."

> "Bud has no great intellectual capacity," says Fay Vincent, "but he just keeps at it, and he's really very good at politics."

I'M ALL EARS If Selig hears no concession from the union, a stoppage may be inevitable.

Notwithstanding his defense, nothing in all of baseball gives the union more of a field day than does Selig, the Brewers' patriarch. The Brewers get rich sucking at not one but two generous teats: that of the taxpayers and that of the richer teams. But now, in 2002, they've got the worst record in the National League—far worse than the records of the teams Selig has fingered for execution.

Critics also point out that when one team had to be shifted from the American League to the National League, it turned out to be—surprise!—Milwaukee, the grand old Senior Circuit town, which could better draw fans from the North Side of Chicago with a natural rivalry against the Cubs. Selig protests that he was always "skitterish" that he would face such allegations, and Kansas City was first given the option to make the move, to establish an intraleague intrastate rivalry with the Cardinals. Says Selig, "For a month I begged David Glass [the Royals' owner], 'Pull the trigger, David.' But he just wouldn't. And then we were the logical choice."

When the contraction of two teams was first publicly broached in October, Selig was immediately accused of marking Minnesota for demise because of his personal friendship with Carl Pohlad, the Twins' elderly owner. Pohlad would get out of the failing baseball business with a handsome profit, and Minnesota's evacuation would open the upper-Midwest territory for the Brewers. Furthermore, it was revealed that not only had Pohlad been Selig's haber-

SUE OGROCKI/REUTERS

dasher, but, more substantively, he had also given the Brewers a $3 million loan.

The issue may be moot now, because thanks to the threat of contraction, the Twins could get the new stadium they need to remain viable. Still, Selig denies that there ever was any sweetheart payback. The Pohlad loan, he says, was short-term and duly reported to the other owners. Besides, the proposed contraction agreement states that if the Twins fold, there can be no windfall for the Brewers because the Twins' TV shares will be split equally among all remaining teams.

Selig's image outside the owners' council fosters suspicion at best, disbelief at worst. Perhaps it's a foolish measure, but in an online poll taken by *The Toronto Star* this year, readers were asked which commissioner they would buy a used car from, and Selig ran a dismal last, garnering only 6% of the vote. He's often, in fact, referred to erroneously as a used-car salesman, a profession that is only about a step up from telemarketer and drug dealer on the U.S. trust scale.

In any event, the quality that has propelled Selig to the top—his cozy, folksy insider's legerdemain—counts for nothing on the public stage, where a persuasive, prepossessing leader might mount his steed and unsheath his saber in defense of his game. So most of Selig's admirers defend the commissioner's lack of a commanding presence by making a virtue out of it, offering some version of "What you see is what you get." And yes, maybe that style is in nowadays. Selig's former co-owner, the man who would be commissioner, George W. Bush, has not been held back by malapropisms and rambling inarticulation.

Still, for all that Selig's stick-to-itiveness has banded his own troops together, what good is perseverance now, in the external battle? What good is tenacity in a press conference? What good is his virtuousness when he's pitted against somebody just as holier-than-thou? What good is his determination when the note is due tomorrow, with interest? "The union runs baseball," Vincent says. "Well, no. Now the banks run baseball. But Fehr knows that, so the effect is the same. He only has to threaten to take the players out in September, and the banks will force the owners to settle, because they simply can't afford to lose the postseason revenue, especially the television money."

Selig swears that this time he will hold his forces together. And there is a certain eloquence in his resolve. Maybe the union hates him so because it takes one to know one. Selig is the first ideologue the players have had looking back at them, trading zeal for zeal. Selig cries out, "People are always asking me, everywhere, even in the big markets, 'When are you going to fix the system to help give everybody a chance?' Well, I'm here to protect the fans' interest and the clubs' interest. Somebody's gotta have the courage to stop the way things are going."

Chuckling at the memory, Selig recalls a meeting in which Jerry Hoffberger of the Orioles got mad at Charley Finley of the A's. "Charley," Hoffberger said, "spare me the indignity of telling me it's raining out when you're pissing on my leg." Well, it is Buddy's analization that it is not precipitation that is falling on baseball right now. Lesser men with only talent, genius or education at their command might not have been dogged enough to stay out in the storm long enough to conclude that. □


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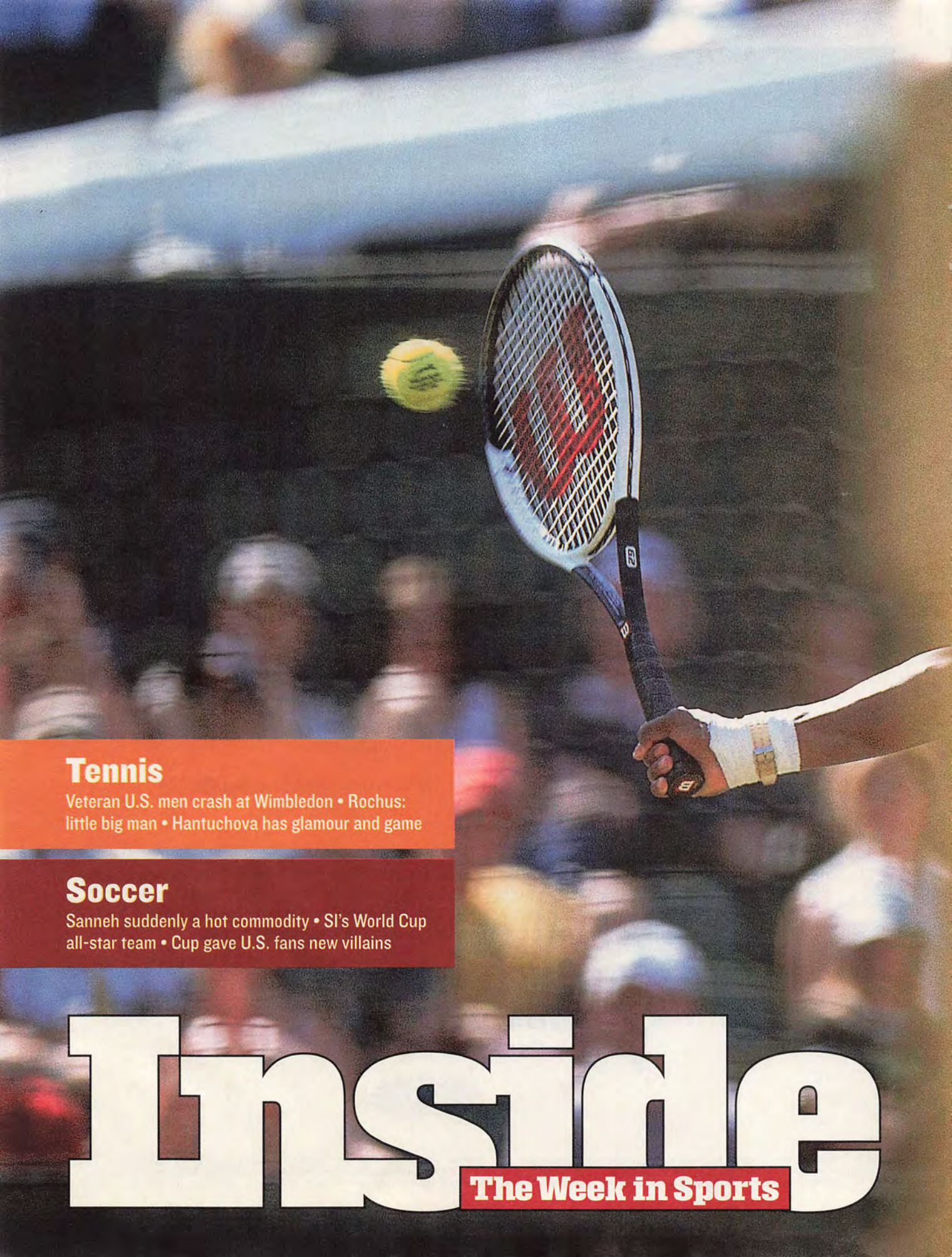

## Tennis

Veteran U.S. men crash at Wimbledon • Rochus: little big man • Hantuchova has glamour and game

## Soccer

Sanneh suddenly a hot commodity • SI's World Cup all-star team • Cup gave U.S. fans new villains

# Inside

The Week in Sports

**POSTING UP** Serena Williams punched a volley during her second-round win over Francesca Schiavone at Wimbledon.

Photograph by **Bob Martin**

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# The Party's Over

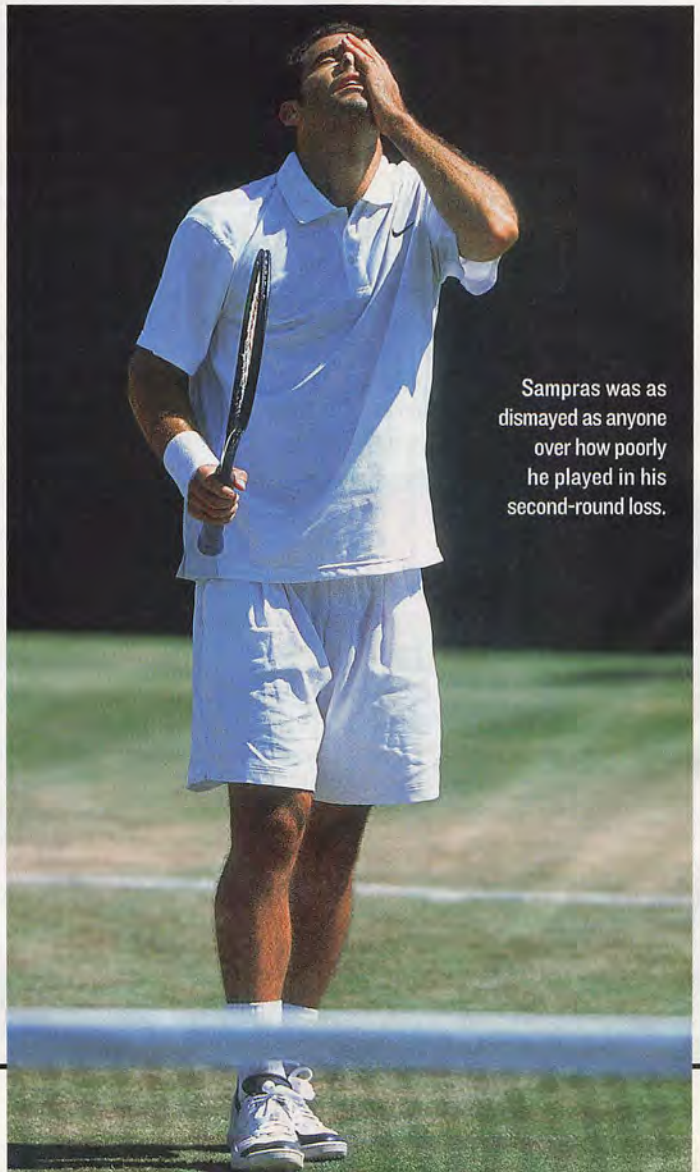
## The greatest generation of U.S. male players showed its age at Wimbledon

by L. Jon Wertheim

LISTEN CLOSELY in the stands at Wimbledon and you can hear the bells of St. Mary's Church. Last week they might have been tolling for the greatest generation of U.S. male players. Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Jim Courier and Michael Chang, all born within 22 months of each other, combined to win 25 Grand Slam singles titles, earn more than $100 million in prize money and claim the year-end world No. 1 ranking from 1992 to '99. Yet Courier wasn't even in this Wimbledon draw, and by the end of the second round the other three weren't either. Regardless of when Sampras, Agassi and Chang join Courier in retirement, it's hard to escape the conclusion that a gilded era has ended.

For Chang, 30, just reaching the second round was an achievement: It doubled his win total for the year. In 1996 Chang was No. 2 in the world. He never got the brass ring, and he hasn't been the same player since. He lost a step in quickness, and his deficit of power became easier to exploit. Chang, who won his only Grand Slam title at the 1989 French Open, is now struggling to stay in the top 100.

Agassi deserves heaps of credit for embracing fitness in his late 20s and transforming himself from a talented player into one of the greatest stars that tennis has known. But at 32 his odometer appears to be down to its last few clicks. Lately his ground game has resembled a cellphone connection unexpectedly going out of range. Last week he simply couldn't find the court in a straight-set loss to little-known Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand. Though Agassi won the Italian Open in May and was still ranked No. 4, he hadn't reached a Grand Slam final since the 2001 Australian Open.



Sampras was as dismayed as anyone over how poorly he played in his second-round loss.

SIMON BRUTY

The most puzzling case is Sampras. Two years ago at Wimbledon he achieved his long-stated goal of setting the career record for Grand Slam singles titles, with 13. Since then Sampras, 31, seems to have aged in dog years, and he hasn't won a title. Lately he hasn't merely been losing; he's been humiliated.

After laboring to beat British wild card Martin Lee in the first round, Sampras fell to No. 145–ranked George Bastl of Switzerland, a subjourneyman who before last week had never won a grass-court match in 10 years on the tour. Before the loss Sampras was ranked No. 13.

The week was equally brutal for all the other American men at Wimbledon, leaving the tournament without a U.S. player in the men's fourth round for the first time since 1922. But while the next generation of Americans can't be expected to replicate the achievements of Sampras, Agassi, Courier and Chang, its failure last week was an aberration. Andy Roddick, 19; James Blake, 22; and Taylor Dent, 21, all have the game to do well on grass, and former NCAA champ Jeff Morrison, 23, made a surprise run to the third round.

Meanwhile, explanations for Sampras's stunningly precipitous decline vary greatly—which is telling in itself. "What he's going through is 90 percent mental," says Paul Annacone, the coach whom Sampras abruptly dispatched last winter. Sampras's current coach, José Higueras, says, "It's more his needing to be aggressive, and he's not aggressive with anything except his serve." It's also clear that he has declined physically; time and again last week he hit his first volley with both feet be-

hind the service line. Courier put it bluntly: "Pete's slow."

There is also what one Sampras confidant calls the Bridgette factor. During his six straight years as the sport's top player, Sampras was, necessarily, self-absorbed. Since marrying actress Bridgette Wilson in the fall of 2000, he claims he's never been happier, but the presence of a partner has changed his routine, and Wilson had influence in the major—and uncharacteristic—career changes that Sampras made earlier this year, including his switching agents.

"Pete's been so precise with his career for so long," says Courier. "At this stage simplicity would probably serve him pretty well."

Whatever the case, it's startling to watch arguably the best tennis player in history struggle against the ATP's marginalia. After his debacle against Bastl, Sampras's voice grew shaky as he rejected suggestions that he retire. "I plan on being back," he said, sounding almost as if he was trying to convince himself. "I'm not going to end my time here with that loss."

Moments later he slung his black Nike duffel bag over his shoulder and headed off in a courtesy car. It was his earliest exit from the All England Club since 1990, and the sun was setting fast.

Daniela Hantuchova

## The New Anna? No, She Can Win

With the Williams sisters running roughshod over the field and Anna Kournikova routinely getting bounced from tournaments before she can create a stir, women's tennis is suddenly hard up for another formidable player and a new glamour girl. It may get both in the form of Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova. A slender, blonde six-footer who seems to be all legs, Hantuchova, 19, has game to match her gams.

A native of Bratislava who was first taught the sport by her grandmother Helena, Hantuchova was touted as a player worth watching when she turned pro in 1999 at age 16. Her star turn, however, came this spring at Indian Wells when she beat top players Justine Henin and Martina Hingis en route to winning her first WTA tour title. Seeded No. 11 at Wimbledon, Hantuchova beat No. 7 Jelena Dokic in straight sets on Monday to reach her first Grand Slam quarterfinal. "I love playing on grass," says Hantuchova, who is ranked No. 12 after starting the year at No. 39, "[but] I think I can do whatever I want on the court; it doesn't matter which surface it is."

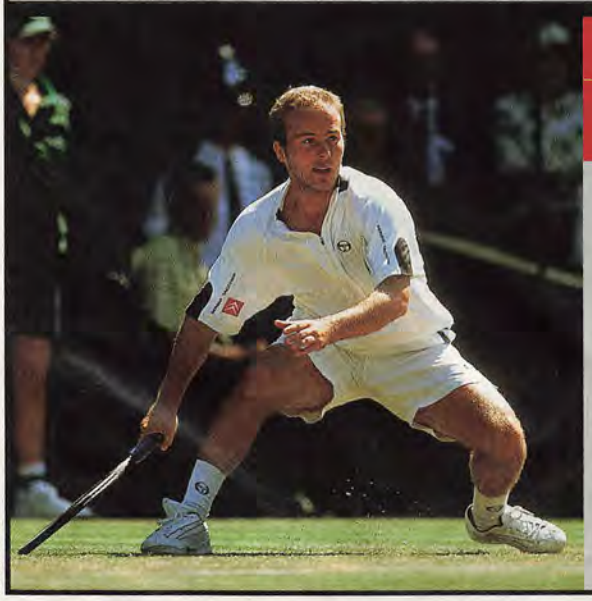
SIMON BRUTY

Hantuchova brushes aside questions about her sex appeal and keeps her eye on the court.

Elegant and graceful, Hantuchova hits the ball fluidly off both wings, serves well and has no glaring weakness. Already a top doubles player—she teamed with Arantxa Sánchez-Vicario to reach the 2002 Australian Open final—she volleys well and, unlike most of her colleagues, isn't afraid to head netward during a point. She also has a strong will: Last month at Eastbourne, Hantuchova blocked out the distractions and beat her idol and tour mentor, Martina Navratilova, in three sets.

Though she has been anointed the New Anna by one of the British tabloids and has attracted a loyal following that outstrips her ranking, Hantuchova is unmoved by the attention. Asked why she has been so well-received at Wimbledon, she shrugs and suggests that it's because she has a British coach, Nigel Sears. (Right. And fans who mob Kournikova's matches come to see her second serve.) Whatever the attraction, the crowds around Hantuchova are likely to grow—and be treated to yet more impressive tennis. □

*To submit a question to Jon Wertheim's weekly tennis mailbag, go to cnnsi.com/tennis.*



BOB MARTIN

## Mighty Mite

**Olivier Rochus defies the theory that the future of men's tennis belongs to Godzillas**

Not long ago tennis's Cassandras divined that behemoths with bionic serves, like 6′ 4″, 202-pound Mark Philippoussis, would dominate the men's tour. Were they ever wrong. Never mind that top-ranked Lleyton Hewitt is 5′ 10″; no other player debunks tennis's big-bang theory as thoroughly as does Belgium's Olivier Rochus. Listed generously at 5′ 5″ and 130 pounds, Rochus, 21, is the smallest male pro in more than 20 years.

Despite giving up nearly a foot in height to Marat Safin, Rochus turned in perhaps the biggest upset of Wimbledon's first week by taking out the second-seeded Russian in four sets. Though the 64th-ranked Rochus had no aces and few service winners, he flummoxed Safin—granted, no difficult feat—with his scrambling and an array of flashy passing shots. (Rochus would lose in the third round to 5′ 8″ Arnaud Clément.) "He can do so many things," Safin says of Rochus. "It has nothing to do with whether he's short."

Rochus lacks not only a big serve but also penetrating strokes, yet he might be the tour's quickest player after Hewitt. He anticipates well and has touch to spare. "People say, 'If only you were taller,' " he says. "I look at it the other way. If I am taller, maybe I don't move as well. I'm done growing, so I'll take the game I have." —L.J.W.

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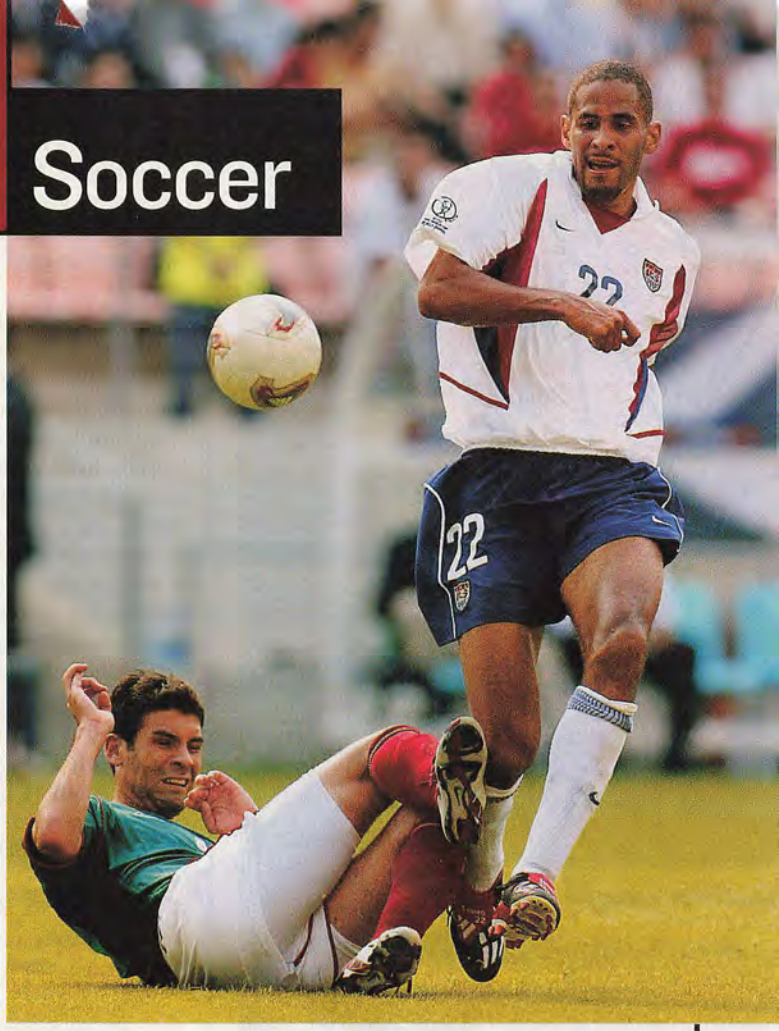
# The World At His Feet

## After a sparkling World Cup, U.S. defender Tony Sanneh is suddenly a wanted man

by Grant Wahl



Top clubs in England and Italy covet the skills Sanneh displayed in South Korea.

NOW THAT the World Cup has ended, it's time for soccer's Silly Season, when European clubs open their checkbooks and plunder the rosters of lesser rivals. This year's market is livelier than usual for American players after their run to the quarterfinals, and no Yank is a more surprisingly hot commodity than defender Tony Sanneh. Eight European clubs, including English powers Arsenal and Newcastle United and Italy's Lazio, have made serious inquiries about the St. Paul native, who was the American revelation of the Cup.

The most remarkable part of Sanneh's rise has been how he seemingly turned overnight from a dubious defender with shaky ball skills into a world-class stopper who was also dangerous on the attack in the tournament. Sanneh credits a confidence-building switch from right back to sweeper last spring at FC Nürnberg, his club in the German Bundesliga. "A lot of people say, 'You really surprised me. I didn't used to like you at all,' " he says. "Well, people are quick to form opinions—until you're on a stage like the World Cup, where opinions don't matter so much."

If Sanneh were 25 instead of 31 his market value might be several times higher than the $2.5 million transfer fee Nürnberg was demanding. (He recently finished the first season of a three-year, $2.7 million contract.) But, says U.S. coach Bruce Arena, "Tony's a young 31. He's also a great athlete, which will allow him to last longer in the game. Physically, mentally and technically, he looks like he's only beginning to peak."

Sanneh started the first three Cup games at right back—his overlapping run and cross to Brian McBride for the third goal against Portugal was a thing of beauty—but he was even more versatile in the last two games as a center back who defended mercilessly and picked his spots to move forward. Though Arena says Sanneh's future on the national team most likely is at center back or holding midfielder, most of Sanneh's club pursuers envision him as a rightside defender.

Sanneh's success proves that American minor league soccer

## Best of the Best

There are no Beckhams or Tottis on SI's All-World Cup squad—in this most improbable tournament, a player had to prove his worth on the field to make our team.

| | |
|---|---|
| **GOALKEEPER** | **Oliver Kahn,** *Germany* Put on a one-man show and dragged his team to the final. |
| **DEFENDERS** | **Tony Sanneh,** *U.S.* Came out of nowhere to be a rock on defense and a threat on attack. |
| | **Rio Ferdinand,** *England* The world's most-in-demand center back is being eyed by Manchester United. |
| | **Puyol,** *Spain* Outplayed linemate Fernando Hierro to help the Spaniards reach the quarterfinals. |
| | **Roberto Carlos,** *Brazil* The relentlessly forward-thinking wingback played fine defense too. |
| **MIDFIELDERS** | **Yoo Sang Chul,** *South Korea* Peerless holding mid set the tone for co-host's magical run to semifinals. |
| | **Papa Bouba Diop,** *Senegal* Top-level showings proved his game-winner against France was no fluke. |
| | **Ronaldinho,** *Brazil* Displayed verve and imagination that were all too rare in this Cup. |
| **FORWARDS** | **Rivaldo,** *Brazil* Theatrics aside, his ruthless artistry and five goals were breathtaking. |
| | **Hasan Sas,** *Turkey* Fearless finisher for surprise semifinalists. |
| | **Ronaldo,** *Brazil* Came full circle after the nightmare in '98 to reclaim his place atop the sport. —G.W. |

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can produce top talent, even if it takes awhile. A striker at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and in two seasons with the Milwaukee Rampage and Minnesota Thunder, the 6' 2", 190-pound Sanneh was spotted at the 1996 MLS combine by Arena, then the D.C. United coach, who converted Sanneh to a rightside midfielder. With D.C., he displayed a knack for performing in big games, scoring goals in the first two MLS Cups, and in '98 he was picked up by the Bundesliga's Hertha Berlin.

Sanneh has adapted comfortably in Germany, where he learned the language and became part-owner of a Berlin pub called Leibniz. This fall he plans to introduce a clothing line called UGLY Wear (an acronym for U Gotta Love Yourself). "It doesn't matter if people don't like the way I play or say I'm ugly," he says. "It's all about being comfortable with who you are."

And, not least, about showing that late bloomers can be just as valuable as 20-year-old phenoms when it counts most.

Mastroeni (in white) felt the full fury of Blanco, who seemed less than pleased with U.S. soccer's arrival.

Favorite Villains

## No Thanks for The Memories

The U.S.'s breakout World Cup shed light on an overlooked aspect of the developing American soccer culture: U.S. fans are starting to cultivate a hatred for certain opposing figures, the way Boston Celtics fans despised Bill Laimbeer. Here are our nominees for top villains.

**Jens Jeremies, Germany** Public enemy No. 1 of U.S. soccer fans, the mirthless former East German earned his status with a vicious mugging of Claudio Reyna in the 1998 World Cup, then took down Reyna *again* during Germany's 1–0 quarterfinal victory this year. That postgame handshake with Reyna didn't fool anybody, Jens.

**Cuauhtémoc Blanco, Mexico** Mexican captain Rafael Márquez got the boot late in the U.S.-Mexico second-round match, but it was the maniacal Blanco who should have seen *rojo* earlier for a wealth of offenses, including kicking and feigning a punch at a prostrate Pablo Mastroeni.

**Luis Hernández, Mexico** After this serial diver with the silly headband earned a yellow card with a ridiculous flop in the box during the 2–0 loss to the Americans, Sam's Army—the U.S. rooting section—serenaded the former Los Angeles Galaxy player with chants of "L-A Re-ject!"

**Hugh Dallas, Scotland** The referee in the U.S.-Germany game missed an obvious penalty when Torsten Frings's forearm prevented Gregg Berhalter's shot from crossing the German goal line. Dallas later said he saw the play clearly and didn't see Frings commit a penalty, but in that situation the call is made nearly 100% of the time.

Beasley Caught on Tape

## Oh, What a Relief It Is

Not content to turn heads with his play during the World Cup, U.S. midfielder DaMarcus Beasley left viewers around the globe with something else to remember from the loss to Germany. As the 20-year-old Beasley was warming up on the sideline late in the first half, he paused (uh, oh), adjusted his shorts (don't do it!) and (eewwww!) urinated.

The world TV feed caught the act on tape, and replays were shown around the globe. (In England, the BBC added a strategically placed soccer ball to obscure the X-rated bits.) Said the bemused Beasley when informed of his newfound notoriety, "What, are they gonna fine me? When you gotta go, you gotta go." □

OLEG POPOV/REUTERS

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# Excuse Me for Asking

by Rick Reilly

IT WAS a simple, straightforward question for Chicago Cubs bomber Sammy Sosa.

"You've said if baseball tests for steroids, you want to be first in line, right?" I asked him last Thursday at his Wrigley Field locker.

"Yes," Sosa replied.

"Well, why wait?" I said.

"What?"

I wrote down the name and phone number of LabCorp, which has a diagnostic test lab in Elmhurst, Ill., 30 minutes from Wrigley. I told him what LabCorp had told me: If any person wants to be tested for steroids, all he has to do is have his physician give a written order and bring in a blood or urine sample. The lab could have the results back within 10 days.

Sosa looked at the piece of paper as if it were a dead rat.

"Why wait to see what the players' association will do?" I continued. "Why not step up right now and be tested? You show everybody you're clean. It'll lift a cloud off you and a cloud off the game. It'll show the fans that all these great numbers you're putting up are real."

Sosa's neck veins started to bulge.

I tried to tell him how important I thought this was. How attendance is headed for the cesspool. A former MVP told SI that 50% of the players are on steroids. The fans are starting to look at every home run record the way people look at Ted Koppel's hair. And there's the threat of a strike. Something good *has* to happen. What could be more positive than the game's leading home run hitter's proving himself cleaner than Drew Carey's fork?

Sosa looked at me as if I were covered in leeches.

"Why are you telling me to do this?" he said. "You don't tell me what to do."

I tried to explain that I wasn't *telling* him to do it, I was just wondering if he didn't think it would be a good move for him and the game.

"You're not my father!" he said, starting to yell. "Why do you tell me what to do? Are you trying to get me in trouble?"

I asked how he could get in trouble if he wasn't doing anything wrong.

"I don't need to go nowhere," he growled. "I'll wait for the players' association to decide what to do. If they make that decision [to test], I will be first in line."

But didn't he think a star stepping forward now, without being *told* to be tested. . . .

"This interview is over!" He started looking around for security. "Over, motherf-----!"

(Note to young sportswriters: Always make your steroid question your *last* question.)

The funny thing is, I doubt Sosa is on steroids. He has never missed more than six games in any of the last five seasons. Most nukeheads come apart like Tinkertoy houses.

But plenty of people wonder: Here's a guy who went nine years without ever hitting more than 40 home runs. In the last four seasons he's hit 66, 63, 50 and 64. Here's a guy who was once a skinny, 165-pound, jet-footed Texas Ranger. Now he's a bulky, 230-pound Mr. Olympus.

> "Why not step up right now and be tested [for steroids]?" I asked Sosa. "It'll lift a cloud off the game."

"This was because of my tooth," he had said earlier in the interview. "When I first came to Texas [in 1989], I had a bad wisdom tooth. The doctor discovered this, and he fixed it. After that, I start to eat much better."

What'd he eat, Fort Worth?

Sosa also explained that the extra muscle and added girth came from feverish weightlifting, not a feverish pharmacist.

"I have a gym in my house [in the Dominican Republic]," he said. "I work out every day, seven days a week. Sometimes at two or three in the morning."

He said the media's suspicions have hurt him. "They think everybody is guilty," he said. "They judge me, but they don't know me."

That's about when I offered up my brilliant public relations maneuver of having himself tested. Soon we were discussing my relationship with my mother.

Maybe Sosa feels he would undermine his union's bargaining power if he had himself tested. But when I asked him if that's why he didn't want to do it, he again mentioned, rather crisply, "You're not my father."

No, but if I were, I'd tell him to get tested. And I'd say it to Barry Bonds and anybody else who says he cares about the game. If they've got nothing to hide, why wait?

True, it would take some large *cojones*. Of course, if these players are on steroids, they lost those a long time ago. □

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